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# Metropolitan Young Adult American Muslims Perceptions of Discrimination Post American Patriot Act

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Ronald McDaniel, Jr.

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Metropolitan Young Adult American Muslims Perceptions of Discrimination Post

American Patriot Act

by

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MS, Walden University, 2013

BS, University of Mississippi, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2019

## Abstract

Several researchers have identified discrimination and profiling as examples of oppression and threats to the democratic process. Scholarly literature provides little evidence on the experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of young adult Arab American Muslims post-9/11. This study addressed the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims between the ages of 18 and 25 regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area since the passage of the American Patriot Act. A phenomenological research study was conducted using Benet's polarities of democracy as the theoretical framework with a focus on diversity and equality. Data were collected from young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 living in a large east coast metropolitan area using participant interview and then coded to identify themes. Participants mainly agreed on noticeable differences in their treatment related to diversity and equality on campus, in the workplace, and in social public settings. Often, participants agreed that they have been targeted through additional measures such as political and media rhetoric which also negatively impacts their seeking of diversity and equality. Overall, the results of this study not only highlight the challenges this group faces but also indicates that the polarity pair of diversity and equality has not been leveraged well, thereby creating a mental concentration camp for participants. Lastly, this study may provide positive social change by allowing US Congress to better understand the negative consequences of the US Patriot Act.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to the countless number of individuals who feel they have no voice in society when democracy seems to have failed them.

## Acknowledgments

This journey has been long and at times stressful, but I could not have gotten through it with some very important people. I want to thank Stephanie for being there through the entire process from day one and ensuring that I kept my mind and focus on this process. I would also like to thank Crystal who has been a great mentor and someone I could occasionally pick up the phone and talk to about this process and providing me with positive insights. I would like to send a great deal of thanks to both Dr. Benet (Committee Chair) and Dr. Hacker (Committee Chairperson) who provide countless hours of feedback, support, and guidance throughout this entire process. I was so glad to see that I had a committee that shared a great deal of interest in my topic as I shared, which made this process smoother. I am forever thankful and wish to work together on post-doctoral work in the future. Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my late father, Ronald Sr. who planted the seed in me starting this process. Months before my father's death, he told me I needed to do more in this world and be an agent of change. I took him up on this challenge and only hope that I have made him proud.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Arab Americans have lived in the United States for decades; however, political unrest after 9/11 created more awareness about their presence. Congress immediately responded to the events of 9/11 with the implementation of the American Patriot Act (APA), which created additional anxiety as vigilance among the U.S. population increased in an effort to deter future acts of domestic terrorism (Cainkar, 2009). . Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the United States of America (Esposito, 1999; Haddad & Esposito, 2000). However, Arab Americans have been practicing Islam in the United States for centuries (Esposito, 1998). September 11, 2001 marked a time in American history when people became more aware of Arab presence (Cainkar, 2009). Post 9/11, the Muslim population has experienced emotional and physical attacks that have led to anxiety, depression, and emotional despair as public surveillance, targeted policing, harassment, negative stereotyping, and discrimination increased in public settings and in the workplace (Bayoumi, 2011; Clay, 2011). Empirical literature suggests that post 9/11 policies have unfavorably led to increased aggression towards Arab American Muslims despite their being American citizens (Bayoumi, 2011; Clay, 2011; Kayaoglu, 2012; Pasha-Zaidi, 2015; Pitt, 2011). Their genealogical connection to foreign born Islamists seems to have put them at risk of violent, aggressive, and retaliatory acts.

Congress granted policing agencies the opportunity to use technology to integrate policing practices among the federal, state, and local levels by signing the APA (Kashan, 2009; Pitt, 2011). The APA, paired with pre-existing stereotypes of Arabs and Arab

Muslims, established unintended discriminatory treatment of Arab American Muslims (Cainkar, 2009; Clay, 2011). However, the gap in literature is that there is some difficulty of determining the impact of 9/11 on Muslims in America due to the absence of studies that examined the perceptions of young adult Arab American Muslims.

Conducting this research may provide valuable insight on the lived experiences of Arab American Muslims in response to the APA. From this perspective, I used historical analysis of the APA, literature on the lived experiences of Arab American Muslims, and one-on-one interviews with young adult Arab American Muslims to provide participants a forum for expressing their voices and concerns toward discrimination.

### **Background**

The background information included in this section includes research specific to the target population and helps to establish a context for this research. Congress enacted the APA to reassure American citizens that the United States government would seek retribution and revenge on the persons who committed acts of terror on American soil (Cainkar, 2009; Clay, 2011; Kashan, 2009; Pitt, 2011). This research builds on previous research but also provides perspectives from a specific target population: young adult Arab American Muslims. Some of the background research provides basic information regarding the atmosphere and climate of the country relative to politics while others provide perspectives from individuals of Arab descent. Such research has been collectively used to show a need for this research:

- Best and Krueger (2011) examined why Americans positively correlated government monitoring with political participation. In addition, Best and Krueger

contended that government monitoring increases more anger than anxiety. They correlated anger with positive political activity and anxiety with negative political engagement. As a result, these responses contribute to profiling.

- Fadda-Conrey (2011) and Pitt (2011) provided information on provisions as outlined in the APA which inadvertently cause discrimination and profiling against American Muslims as a community. Fadda-Conrey produced an essay concerning the fictional perceptions of Arab Americans post 9/11 using self-iterations. Pitt also examined the negative effects of the APA citing the consequences of discrimination and its impact on targeted populations.
- Bonet (2011) also indicated that specific provisions of the APA have impacted lives of American Muslim youth, through the ability to obtain private records on young students. Bonet researched the impact of the APA on students attending secondary schools suggesting that the law contributed to the over-targeting of Arab and Arab American families which has had damaging effects on the overall well-being of the students.
- Bayoumi (2011) and Kayaoglu (2012) suggested that discrimination of American Muslims as a community has increased over the years, specifically targeting the youth. Bayoumi provided examples of both acceptance and rejection which allows for the examination of varied responses in the review of literature. Kayaoglu focused on cases of denied free speech from a religious perspective and offered a framework for understanding Islamophobia.



- Pasha-Zaidi (2015) provided understanding on how American Muslim youth have been labeled through appearance and perception. Pasha-Zaidi's focus was narrower than I intend to pursue as her research specifically focused on the Hijab Effect and its impact on the relationship between attractiveness and Islamic religion. However, this research contributed to the feelings of anxiety among the target population.
- Research presented by Aroian (2012) provided additional insight on discrimination and profiling while also suggesting further research to understand how young adolescent American Muslims deal with this phenomenon. In my research, I aimed to understand how young adult Arab American Muslims deal with discrimination and profiling.
- Saedi (2012) provided some insight on the impact of profiling on Muslim American youth post 9/11. However, Saedi also urged future qualitative researchers to explore participant stories of discrimination and profiling after 9/11 of Muslim American youth.
- Cainkar (2009) examined the perspectives of Arab Americans and Muslim Americans post-9/11. Cainkar described what it felt like or meant to be an Arab American or Muslim American living in the United States after 9/11 using ethnographic observation, in-depth interviewing, and oral history interviewing. Cainkar argued that 9/11 did not create the social and political marginalization of Muslim Arab Americans. Instead, these constructs were developed long before to justify profiling. Cainkar also explained how Arab Muslim Americans have been

targeted because they fit the stereotypical profile of perceptions of terrorists more than any other Muslims. Cainkar found that women experienced more discrimination than men because of their hijabs. This is consistent with the Hijab Effect that Pasha-Zaidi (2015) examined.

In researching this topic, one recognizable gap is the absence of studies of perceptions that reflect on the perspectives of Arab American Muslims pre-9/11 (Clay, 2011).

Cainkar (2009) is one researcher who mentioned discrimination and profiling as they relate to social constructions. I expanded on this idea and brought to light the actual experiences of the target population to add value to research but also showed the social and emotional impact of responsive policies like the APA. In lieu of the availability of such data, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of Arab American Muslims to societal discrimination before and after the implementation of the APA.

### **Problem Statement**

As policing agencies have implemented the responsibilities defined in the APA, the resulting consequence has triggered anger, anxiety (Best & Krueger, 2011) discrimination, and acceptance (Bayoumi, 2011) towards American Muslims. However, people who appear to be of Arab decent have felt most of the effects from the APA as it relates to surveillance, freedom of religion, speech, and other civil liberties (Pitt, 2011). Additionally, Best and Krueger (2011) emphasized the role of the APA and how it promotes both discrimination and profiling. According to Fadda-Conrey (2011) research has indicated that American Muslims have faced racial and religious discrimination and profiling because of political factors through the APA since its implementation in 2001.

Because of this form of discrimination and profiling, Pitt (2011) has closely associated the treatment of American Muslims after 9/11 resulting from the implementation of the APA to the treatment of Japanese Americans during WWII and African Americans in American history.

In response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11, President Bush heavily regarded Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations and utilized it to develop foreign policies (Al-Ahsan, 2009). On September 12, 2001, Congress vowed to expediently act in response to the acts of terrorism on American soil (Zogby, 2002). Such vow included a declaration that the United States would engage in a quest to pursue, bring to justice, and reprimand perpetrators responsible for the terrorist acts on September 11, 2001. Congress also vowed to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of Arab-Americans, American Muslims, and Americans from South Asia by ensuring that law enforcement agencies followed legal and ethical procedures in profiling (Zogby, 2002). Additionally, Congress condemned any acts of violence or discrimination against individuals included in the groups whose civil rights they vowed to protect (Zogby, 2002). From the onset of this legislation, it appeared that U.S. lawmakers understood that there would be potential backlash. However, the basic understanding from the President of the United States was that there would not be any associated targeting amongst any group of people which would be directly or indirectly impacted. That assumption was quickly diminished in the weeks which followed legislation.

Within weeks of the attack, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Chair Dominquez met with the leaders of major Arab American and Muslim

organizations to gain feedback on workplace backlash (Zogby, 2002, p. 7). In continued efforts to mitigate problematic issues, the month following the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. Senate Democratic leadership invited Arab American and Muslim American leaders to the Capital to discuss how they could promote tolerance and acceptance of Arab and Muslim Americans for the sake of security (Zogby, 2002, p. 7). Lastly, in a telephone conference with New York City Mayor Giuliani, President. Bush said, “Our nation should be mindful that there are thousands of Arab Americans who live in New York City, who love their flag just as much as [we] do, and...that as we seek to win the war, that we treat Arab Americans with the respect they deserve” (Zogby, 2002, p. 7). From this conversation alone, important political figures such as Giuliani and Bush felt that it was important to place emphasis that this is attack is not to be categorized for all people but just the bad ones.

However, the following incidents, as reported in their respective newspaper outlets, outline the backlash on Arab Americans after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These incidents only represent a portion of some 700 attacks in the immediate nine weeks following 9/11 (Zogby, 2002):

- Phoenix, Arizona:** On Sept. 15th, Roque shot to death Sodhi (Arizona Republic, 2006). Roque allegedly killed Sodhi as part of a multiple-incident shooting rampage that included shootings at a Lebanese-American clerk who escaped injury, at another gas station in Mesa, and at the home of an Afghan family. (Arizona Republic, 2006)

- **Reedley, California:** Ahmed, a Yemeni grocer, was shot to death in his shop over the weekend (Washington Post, 2001). Family members said the day before he was killed, death threat that included anti-Arab statements was found on windshield of Ahmed's car. It is being investigated as a hate crime. (Washington Post, 2001)
- **Fresno, California:** Ahmed was shot and killed while at work (The Fresno Bee, 2001). Witnesses saw four males speed from the store in white sedan (The Fresno Bee, 2001). No money or merchandise was stolen. Ahmed had received threats since mid-September. (The Fresno Bee, 2001)
- **Cleveland, Ohio:** Ford Mustang driven through entrance of Ohio's largest mosque. Mosque unoccupied at time; only driver injured. (Estimated damages: \$100,000) (Associated Press, 2001)

In retaining the focus of this research, these examples provide a brief examination of the hatred individuals of Arab descent encountered post-9/11. After 9/11, anger towards Arabs impacted Americans' perspectives of all Arabs and Muslims regardless of their native country or country of resident (Cainkar, 2009). Cainkar provided a perspective on the impact of 9/11 on Arab Americans and Muslim Americans while simultaneously paying special attention to the lived experiences of both individually and collectively using the theoretical underpinnings of social construction. Much of the perspectives towards Arab American Muslims were based on the media portrayal pre-9/11 and post-9/11.

The issues of profiling and discrimination against the American Muslim culture have been documented by many researchers. Bonet (2011) and Aroian (2012) provided information of how young American Muslims have often become targets of discrimination and inequality through the provisions of the APA. Aroian and Pasha-Zaidi (2015) found that young adult American Muslims are specifically targeted for their adherence to cultural traditions such as the wear of traditional clothing and the hijab in their social settings. Although descriptions of these types of profiling and discrimination of young adult American Muslims have been identified, the role of the implementation of the APA is the underlying reason (Aroian, 2012; Bonet, 2011; Fadda-Conrey, 2011). Little attention has been given to the impact profiling and discrimination has had on young adult Arab American Muslims. Discrimination of other minorities is often documented through quantitative and qualitative analyses. Pitt (2011) displayed the impact of frustration from American Muslims in dealing with discrimination and abuse; however, this type of research is lacking for the young adult Arab American Muslim. The goal of this research is to provide similar insight from young adult Arab American Muslims to articulate the lived experiences of this group.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of young adult Arab American Muslims when subjected to racial and religious discrimination and profiling because of the APA. To address this issue, a qualitative case study including a phenomenological approach was used. Interviews along with

occasional nonparticipant observation of select participants were conducted to further understand and explain this phenomenon and its effects on the sample population.

### **Research Question**

The underlying goal of this research was to address the research gaps previously mentioned utilizing the following research question:

What are the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims between the ages of 18 and 25, regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area since the passage of the American Patriot Act?

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

I relied on Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory as the theoretical framework and Johnson's (1996) polarity management concepts as the conceptual framework. According to Johnson, polarity management is a model and set of principles that makes it easier to deal with polarities. Polarities are defined as unavoidable or unsolvable ongoing, chronic issues (Johnson, 1996). Polarity management can assist with simplifying complexity and provide stability during accelerated change. Benet used Johnson's model of polarity management concepts to explain how communities can deal with issues pertaining to democracy. Throughout his research, Benet (2013) recognized the difficulty in effectively managing a positive and negative force as the goal is to maximize the positive while minimizing the negative. Benet used Johnson's polarities management theory as a conceptual framework for understanding the management of sets of opposites as the two sides of polarities are

interdependent meaning that both must be addressed in the development of solutions. It is through these lenses that this research was developed.

Polarities of democracy provide the theoretical framework and outline a core of 10 elements which must be managed to attain sustainable and just communities (Benet, 2013). The 10 elements are organized as five polarity pairs: freedom and authority, justice and due process, diversity and equality, human rights and communal obligations, and participation and representation. While all elements were defined and explained in the review of literature, the polarities of diversity and equality were the primary focus in examining participant responses.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The use of qualitative research provided the fundamental approach to understanding how young adult Arab American Muslims have experienced the phenomenon. This was completed through one-on-one interviews conducted with 14 young adult Arab American Muslim participants between the ages of 18-25 in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area. The participants were selected through respondent driven sampling (RDS) method. Additionally, I used responses to the one-on-one interviews to identify two participants to interview in further detail. To triangulate the data, member checking and audio/video recording was used. Merriam (1997) highlighted various data collection procedures are essential when performing qualitative case study research. All data collected was processed and analyzed through a qualitative research software application. This software application assisted in coding the data.



Qualitative research is unique in that it typically includes a smaller sample size in comparison to quantitative research. The participant size is relatively smaller for phenomenological studies; therefore, the selection of 14 participants was sufficient for conducting interviews for this study. Creswell (2013) indicated that qualitative research is not a research method that requires extensive number of participants for data collection as its counterpart quantitative research does. Qualitative research also provides insight about human experiences in a way that cannot be obtained through quantitative research (Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, interviews have always been linked to phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2013). To ensure validity, triangulation of research was used in this study as previously mentioned.

### **Definitions**

These definitions were pertinent to the development of this research. These terms will be used throughout this research:

*Allah*: Al (the) and ilah (God) are translated to “the God” (Khan, 2006, p. 12).

The Arabic term represents the notion there is one God, and the only one God is Allah.

*Arab*: An Arab is a person who is from a native Arab nation (Arab American Institute, 2016).

*Arab American*: An American who is of Arab culture or heritage. (Arab American Institute, 2016)

*Arab American Muslims*: Americans who are of Arab descent and of the Muslim faith (Fadda-Conrey, 2011).

*Discrimination*: Refers to any unjust, unethical, or immoral form of treatment towards a person or persons based on cultural heritage or some other type of categorization such as race, age, or sex (Keene, 2011).

*Islam*: The literal translation is “submission to the will of God” (Esposito, 2002, p. 153). The root word “slm” means peace (Khan, 2006).

*Islamophobia*: This term describes the growing anxiety of the presence of the Islamic religion and Muslims in the United States (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008).

*Jihad*: The literal translations mean struggle or effort (Ahmad, 2003); however, Muslims use the term to describe an internal struggle within to live out the Muslim faith to one’s best ability, the struggle to be build an ideal Muslim society, or the struggle to defend the Islamic faith among outsiders (Esposito, 1988). The three examples represent the internal, community, and external conflicts.

*Muslim*: An Arab term that means “a person who submits” (Khan, 2006, p. 1999). Muslims have specific obligations which include worshipping only Allah, distinguishing between the Creator and his gifts, upholding obligations to Allah, building a life on the five pillars of Islam, choosing right over wrong, being an ethical and moral human being, abiding by the fundamental principles of Islam, and living an ethical and moral life (Khan 2006, p. 14).

*Young adults*: For the purposes of this research, young adults are individuals who fall between the ages of 18 and 25.

### **Assumptions**

All research, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, are based on assumptions that are directly or indirectly aligned with philosophical principles of the research design (Ponterotto, 2005). There are also unique assumptions of qualitative research that are relevant to all studies regardless of the specific focus and research questions. One immediate assumption of qualitative research is that the researcher is the most important feature of the study in that he is responsible for developing a process that will allow him to serve as the primary instrument for data collection (Ponterotto, 2005).

Researchers also use research paradigms to guide their research; research paradigms are frameworks derived from worldviews (Creswell, 2007). This research uses critical theory which is based on three types of interest to generate knowledge (Wellmer, 2014): (a) technical interest generates empirical and analytical knowledge, (b) practical interest generates hermeneutics and historical knowledge, and (c) emancipating interest generates critical knowledge. Using critical theory, an investigative approach was employed to examine the stance of research participants using the research question and semi structured interview questions.

One assumption of this study is that the selected participants were born and have been living in the United States post-9/11. This aspect is critical because research regarding lived experiences focus on perceived discrimination because of being in the United States after 9/11. The discrimination that is described in the various literature sources is predicated on being in the United States to experience the profiling that was described. Another assumption is that participants would be able to articulate and

communicate how their own experiences have constructed their own experiences. Such experiences may be shaped by historical, cultural, social, or religious factors despite participant relatedness and/or similarities. Lastly, it was the assumption that the selected participants who self-identified as being an Arab American Muslim were telling the truth.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The use of qualitative research principles limited the generalizability of this research; however, the scope of this research was to understand the perspectives of a specific group of individuals based on the passage of national policy. The targeted population provides unique experiences regarding early schooling, public interactions, secondary education, and ultimately the workforce. This study did not focus on the experiences of older adults because various literature provides insight on the experiences of these individuals.

Additionally, this study focused on Arab American Muslims instead of Arab Americans because the inclusion of the participants of the Muslim faith provides additional background information regarding discrimination and profiling. It is important to develop a wealth of research regarding this topic to substantiate the perspectives of research participants with the hope of detailing the injustices this group of individuals have faced.

### **Limitations**

The scope of this research was limited due to the small sample size of research participants. This research was unique in that it targeted responses from a specified group of participants. While the research is not generalizable, I used findings to make

policy recommendations for public policy. Another limitation is that this research did not seek the experiences of older populations of Arab American Muslims. Input from these individuals could have been valuable; however, I chose to focus on a range of participants who are either in school or in the workforce which previous research shows a need to be conducted.

Another limitation of phenomenological research is that it is difficult to prevent researcher induced bias. The foundation of this research hints at the existence of perceived profiling and discrimination. Even so, there is a limitation to the transferability of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). This limitation was addressed by providing a thorough representation and analysis of participant responses. The research assumptions and context of the research sufficiently included credible information from participants which were triangulated through handwritten notes, audio recording, and member checking. Credibility can only be established through participant verification (Creswell, 2007). However, as the researcher I was responsible for ensuring that I use my knowledge as a researcher of this study to concisely communicate the perspectives of participants. This strengthened the validity and credibility of the resulting findings.

### **Significance**

This project addressed the gap in research by exploring the under researched area of the impact of the APA on discrimination and profiling of young American Muslims (Aroian, 2012; Bonet, 2011). Results from this study provide further insight into how discrimination and profiling has become closely associated with policy implementation

which has inadvertently targeted certain populations. Callahan et al. (2012) indicated that advocacy is an important feature in promoting social change. Furthermore, results of this study may provide positive social change for young adult Arab American Muslims by suggesting changes in current public policy.

### **Summary**

The overall goal of this research was to use Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory to assess the impact of discrimination and profiling on young adult Arab American Muslims. Benet used both critical theory as a philosophical perspective and Johnson's (1996) theory of polarity management as a conceptual framework to construct the polarities of democracy theory. Similarly, these three perspectives were used to guide this research. The use of phenomenological research methods was chosen because it can be used to collect research experiences from target populations selected for research (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Using critical theory as a philosophical paradigm allowed clearer understanding of the cultural relevance of this research by confronting the social, historical, and ideological forces that helped to create these experiences as critical theory is essential to explaining how people overcome oppression and achieve freedom in humanity (Benet, 2012; Bohman 2012).

From this perspective, studying this topic was important for three reasons: (a) to examine the lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims to understand the impact of the APA on this target population; (b) to give voice to young adult Arab American Muslims; (c) and to impact public policy decision making. While various researchers have contributed to establishing a need for understanding the Arab culture,

their research is general and does not adequately focus on Arab American culture. My research is unique in that it builds Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory which is based on philosophical principles of critical theory.

Due to the use of qualitative methods for this research, it was not generalizable to larger populations of Arab American Muslims. However, this research is valuable for understanding how the APA impacted discriminatory practices and profiling in elementary and postsecondary education, the workplace, and in the public. In chapter 2, I substantiated the need for this research by using primary sources and secondary sources to establish a base for the theoretical framework. I examined the perspectives of each researcher and made connections as to how their work is relevant for this research. I explained the political and historical importance of the APA and other relevant legislation as it pertains to this research. Lastly, I established a foundation for the employment of phenomenological research methods to elicit the perspectives of the 14 young adult Arab American Muslims who participated in this research study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Chapter 2, I include the literature search terms, the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework, and the review of literature relevant to the research variables. In this section, I detail the work of other researchers to uncover the experiences of the target population coupled with definitions of democracy, discrimination, and profiling.

### **Introduction**

Congress passed the APA in response to the events on September 11, 2001, in an attempt to calm the fears of American citizens (Bayoumi, 2011; Best & Krueger, 2011; Fadda-Conrey, 2011; Pitt, 2011). The result was a mix of anger and anguish similar to emotions experienced when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor (Jardins, 2010). Since 9/11 and the congressional passage of laws related to enhancing the national security, the relationship among various ethnicities has changed for all Americans (Bayoumi, 2011; Best & Krueger, 2011; Fadda-Conrey, 2011; Pitt, 2011). However, Arab American Muslims have felt most of the effects from the APA as it relates to surveillance, freedom of religion, speech, and other civil liberties (Pitt, 2011). Much of the related effects Arab American Muslims have experienced can relate directly to discrimination and profiling, often associated with the rhetoric and generalized understanding of the terms within the APA (Best & Krueger, 2011). Furthermore, additional research examines specific discrimination and profiling with regards to religion and racial/cultural affiliation as a result of political factors aligned with the APA. (Fadda-Conrey, 2011). While there is research about the impact of frustration from dealing with discrimination and abuse, there



is a lack of research to closely articulate the feelings and attitudes of those affected, with a major focus on the young adult Arab American Muslim population.

One goal of conducting this research was to address the lack of research on the lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims and the continued struggle for local, state, and federal policies to equally serve all populations while simultaneously minimizing the potential for discrimination and profiling. More specifically, the young adult Arab American Muslim population proves to be at risk to suffer the most severe forms of discrimination and profiling today (Cainkar, 2009). Such discrimination includes profiling in public venues such as on domestic flights and other modes of transportation. Bonet (2011) and Aroian (2012) articulated the many ways of how young American Muslims have often become target of discrimination and inequality through the provisions of the APA. In turn, the young adult Arab American Muslim community faces a continuing uphill struggle when dealing with discrimination and profiling if this particular policy remains in place.

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of young adult Arab American Muslims when experiencing racial and religious discrimination and profiling as a result of the APA. A qualitative case study including a phenomenological approach was used in order to explore these attributes from the selected population in order to portray firsthand accounts of such instances. Moreover, in today's political arena, negative rhetoric has been used to strengthen stereotypes about Arab American Muslims. By conducting this research, I have been able to articulate how the APA has impacted the lives of young adult Arab American Muslims. The research

results also allow policy makers to fully understand the direct impact of policies such as the APA from the illustration of the personal experiences of the participants that can have an impact on the way local, state, and federal laws are developed.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The referenced material presented has been accessed through online resources such as the research databases located within Walden University Library and Google Scholar. Resident research was accessed through the Accokeek Branch Library in Accokeek, Maryland, Georgetown Neighborhood Library in Washington, DC, and the Georgetown University Lauinger Library and Blommer Science Library located on the campus of Georgetown University. Key search terms used included *polarities of democracy, polarity management, diversity, equality, democracy, oppression, discrimination, profiling, stereotypes, young adults, Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, and Arab American diversity*.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

This research regarding Arab American Muslims used Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy as the theoretical framework. Benet's work is based on Johnson's (1996) theory of polarity management. As a conceptual framework, polarity management describes how solutions are developed as problems are managed. From this conceptual lens, Benet outlined 10 polarity elements that are necessary for attaining and maintaining sustainable, just communities. These elements are freedom and authority, justice and due process, diversity and equality, human rights and communal obligations, and participation and representation (Benet, 2013). The elements particularly applicable

to this research include diversity and equality as they relate to the lens of constitutional values.

### **Conceptual Framework: Johnson's Polarity Management Theory**

Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory was derived using Johnson's (1996) concepts of polarity management as a conceptual framework. I also used Johnson's concepts as a conceptual framework in this research because readers cannot fully understand Benet's work without an explanation of Johnson's work. Johnson contended that polarities are sets of opposites that cannot function well in isolation. The two sides are interdependent requiring consideration towards both polarities. The ultimate purpose is to consider both opposites instead of limiting the solution to one option. The solution should not use an either/or model to address the problem. Johnson also believed that there were distinct instances when polarities existed. Polarity management is relevant when there is an unsolvable problem as such problems exist when there is a dilemma in polarity that needs to be managed (Johnson, 1996, p. 14). In referring to Benet's theory of polarities of democracy, there lies the opportunity to use polar elements to explain the impact of oppression on target populations.

Johnson's (1992, 1996) theory of polarity management served two unique purposes. Johnson believed that the theory could assist with the management of unsolvable problems or polarities (p. vii). Johnson also believed that the theory of polarity management would be intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding for those who contribute to the previous purpose. Polarity management is defined as the improvement of skills for identifying unsolvable problems and managing them instead of wasting time

on solving them. It is under this premise that Benet (2006, 2012, 2013, 2015) developed his theory of polarities of democracy. The term *polarities* referred to a set of opposites, and polarity management referred to perspectives for producing the best of the opposites while simultaneously avoiding limits (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013, 2015). Johnson's polarity management theory served as a conceptual framework for Benet's work because Johnson's work provided a context for managing polarities. Benet believed that democracy is a solution to a problem: oppression. However, solving the problem requires polarity management. In this, the resulting solution must examine and manage the impact of opposing forces.

### **Theoretical Framework: Benet's Polarities of Democracy Theory**

Benet's (2013) theory of polarities of democracy focused on building healthy, sustainable, and just communities. There are 10 elements to the polarities of democracy, and the 10 elements are arranged in five polarity pairs. The pairs include freedom and authority, justice and due process, diversity and equality, human rights and communal obligations, and participation and representation (Benet, 2012). Benet focused his premise on the democratization of workplaces and societies to challenge social and environmental issues at the national, state, and local levels. One main claim of Benet's theory was that structural forces create conditions for oppression. Oppression from this perspective was defined as the economic or health disparities experienced by the oppressed; oppression can also be psychological and spiritual oppression experienced by those who oppress as well.

<b>Freedom</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Authority</b>
<b>Justice</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Due Process</b>
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Equality</b>
<b>Human Rights</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Communal Obligations</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Representation</b>

*Figure 1.* The polarities of democracy model

Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory provided a framework that may give understanding to the need to create a peaceful, just society post-9/11. As outlined in Figure 1, elements are arranged by their polarity relationships. Each element has both positive and negative aspects, but the objective is to manage the polarities so as to maximize the positive aspects and minimize the negatives (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). Democracy is a concept that the people in the United States of America have been afforded since the oration and subsequent signing of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. People living in democratic societies are only aware of such democratic principles, and the United States has long engaged in wars in foreign nations to transfuse the rights of democracy to other nations. Despite perceived variance among cultures, Benet (2006) contended that the polarity of democracy theory is applicable to dissimilar cultures including Arab American Muslim cultures.

Democracy exists to overcome oppression, and through that communities can build just and sustainable societies (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). Benet's works builds on the philosophical perspective of critical theory and the conceptual framework of polarity management concepts. An objective of critical theory is to overcome oppression and

achieve freedom in humanity (Benet 2012; Bohman, 2012). Furthermore, critical theory is distinguishable from more traditional concepts of social theory due to its relationship with liberation (Wellmer, 2014) and its purpose of democratizing the research process itself (Bohman, 2012).

Phori (2016) also used critical theory to examine how a framework for enhancing collaborative skills among members of the school governing body could be developed. Phori justified the need for critical theory and critical emancipatory research by focusing on their ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings. Phori used participatory action research to collect data for the research. Phori explained that in a democratic society, people who are passionate about a cause will collaborate for the sake of unity. Such collaboration and collegiality manifests sustainable decisions which represent shared power. These shared measures are valuable for creating long-term shared responsibility. In order to overcome oppression, collaboration and collegiality must be embedded into the culture. In addition, Phori used Benet's (2015) polarities of democracy model to conceptualize a definition for democracy based on respective paired binaries. For Phori, democracy allows people to develop new ideas which are compatible to open-mindedness. Through deliberative democracy, people can engage in dialogue and make informed decisions.

Benet (2013) contended that leveraging the polarities of democracy promotes and enhances democratization and that such democratization is critical for overcoming workplace and societal oppression. Benet's work has been included in varied doctoral studies focusing on workplace or societal oppression including a couple that served as the

inspiration for this research. For example, Benet's polarities of democracy framework was used to explore factors in the culture of the Urhobo speaking community in the Niger Delta to strengthen the implementation of the amnesty program in Nigeria with the goal of preventing a return to the use of violence (Tobor, 2014).

Tobor (2014) interviewed 20 Urhobo ex-militants to gain information about positive social change that could have a valuable impact on the Urhobo culture. Tobor first provides a historical synopsis of the Niger Delta region and its people. Then, Tobor investigated if and how the Urhobo culture could positively contribute to successful implementation of the amnesty program (p. 11). Tobor used Benet's polarities of democracy theory as a unifying element of democracy to guide social change. Tobor's use of the polarities of democracy illustrated the successful approach for approaching the problem and being able to apply such a theory. Furthermore, in this study, I similarly used the polarities of democracy as an element to guide positive social change.

Strouble (2015) also used Benet's theory of polarities democracy to investigate how racial oppression shapes social capital in majority African American communities. Strouble examined racism as a potential barrier to social capital resources. He used Benet's theory and critical race theory as theoretical frameworks for investigating and understanding how various forms of racism impede social and economic growth. From this perspective, social capital is defined as the resources within a community that makes it sustainable (Strouble, 2015, p. 3). Through extensive literature analysis, Strouble found that many researchers failed to address race and social capital because of the uncomfortable nature of race discussions. Strouble used the case study approach to

understand and explain the relationship between racism and social capital in low-diversity majority Black communities (p. 5) using both critical race theory and polarities of democracy to analyze data. He also analyzed ways for similar communities to overcome racism and social capital injustices. Tobor's (2014) and Strouble's application of Benet's polarities of democracy provide guidance for understanding other types of oppression in the context of promoting positive social change. Additionally, both authors displayed how the polarities of democracy theory can be utilized. For this study I also display how successful polarities of democracy can be used as a theory in order to determine if a true democracy has been met based on positive and negative aspects of the polarity pairs.

Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory has also been used in a different field for promoting positive social change. Whereas Tobor (2014) and Strouble (2015) used the theory to examine oppression, Griffith (2017) used Benet's polarities of democracy theory to examine whether democracy was being served rightly and justly within homeless communities. Griffith examined the perspectives of shelter staff workers on the barriers that the homeless face in finding and maintaining long-term housing. In this case study, Griffith used two homeless shelters in New Jersey to seek participants and to examine the relationship of fair and just democratic processes in supporting the housing first model. Using inductive coding to identify themes and patterns, Griffith found that there was a lack of available housing, few resources to gain access to housing, and a lack of knowledge about resources for housing acquisition and maintenance. The social implications were that local, state, and federal policies should



reflect increased accountability in the allocation for funding housing support and for developing a volunteer basis to serve the needs of the chronically homeless.

Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) focused on a variety of paired elements in his polarities of democracy theory. Using Johnson's (1992, 1996) polarity management theory as a conceptual framework, the 10 elements of the polarities of democracy theory were used to determine if all polarity pairs were impacted; however, diversity and equality were of special interest based on the context of my research. It is from this perspective that Johnson's (1992, 1996) and Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) work were applied to this research.

Benet used the term democracy to discuss balance (2006, 2012, 2013). However, researchers have used the term in different contexts, and I want to provide a context for this research by expanding on definitions of democracy and then exploring how democratic principles are connected to perceptions of discrimination and profiling. Because there is varied research about democracy, discrimination, and profiling as isolated terms and as connected terms, I used a combination of terms to find the most appropriate articles for this research.

### **Literature Review of Related Terms**

This research was based on the need to identify the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Colombia Metropolitan area since the passage of the APA. Benet's Polarities of Democracy theory was used to analyze those results to determine if

the one or more pairs could be more effectively managed to obtain greater democracy by suggesting changes in public policy.

Researchers have defined democracy from several contexts, and it is therefore important to make distinctions among these definitions. It is also important for me to build an argument for continued exploration of how discrimination and profiling impacts the lives of young adult Muslims so that we can not only be aware but so that we can also improve our relationships with them.

### **Various Perspectives of Democracy**

In reviewing the various perspectives on overcoming oppression, it became apparent that democracy has different denotations and connotations for varying civilizations of people. Benet (2013) acknowledged the variance in definitions of democracy. For some theorists, for democracy to exist, the people must rule society through self-government (Coppedge, et al., 2011). However, there are various conceptions of democracy that make it impossible to develop an exclusive perspective of democracy. For example, democracy can be viewed from an electoral, liberal, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative, or egalitarian perspective. The diverse elements of these perspectives are outlined in Table 1. Contributing to the complexity of a widely-accepted definition of democracy is the juxtaposition of democracy and capitalism in America (Curran, 2016).

Table 1

### **Conceptions of Democracy**

Conception or Type	Basic Principles	Guiding Question
Electoral	Competition	How are officials elected

	Elite	for public office?
Liberal	Limited government Civil liberties Transparency	Is political power decentralized?
Majoritarian	Majority rule	Does the majority rule?
Deliberative	Government by the people	What role do ordinary citizens have in politics?
Egalitarian	Government by reason	Does public deliberation impact political decisions?

*Note.* Adapted from conceptions of democracy found in Coppedge (2011).

Electoral Democracy is based on the idea that it is achieved through competition among groups of leaders (Coppedge, et al, 2011). Political parties and elections are critical instruments to this conception. Additional factors such as civil liberties and an active media also impact the electoral process as leaders vie for electoral approval (p. 253). In order for the electoral concept of democracy to be achieved, several polarity pairs must be effectively managed. These include freedom and authority, human rights and communal obligation, and participation and representation. Benet (2013) also noted that the inability to effectively manage the freedom and authority pair also negatively impacted the diversity and equality polarity pair.

Liberal Democracy stresses the importance of transparency and civil law (Coppedge, 2011, p. 253). Such focus is defining features of democracy instead of political affirmation. Political power is viewed negatively as it judges the limitations of government as such control tends to oppress minorities or result in the loss of individual liberties. From this lens, polarity management would have to include effective management of the participation and representation polarity pair, as well as the diversity

and equality polarity pair. Benet (2013) noted that many communities focus too much on representation and not enough on participation even though the effective management both are critical for social change.

Diamond studied the gap between liberal and electoral democracy summarizing that such differences were based on degree of democracy instead of kinds of democracy (Møller, 2007). Diamond developed a distinction between liberal and electoral democracy and demonstrated how recent examples of democratization fit within the electoral lens.

Majoritarian Democracy takes the perspective that the will of the majority should be sovereign (Coppedge, 2011). In addition, political institutions must be centralized and powerful. The majoritarian view examines democracy from a unified approach (Sanver, 2009). One question that is significant to this approach is whether the majority rules. This approach to democracy seems consistent with the effective management of the freedom and authority polarities, and justice and due process polarities (Benet, 2013).

Participatory Democracy views the democratic process from lineage and ancestry, with the motivating factor as the fear of representative rule (Coppedge, 2011). . Direct rule by the people is preferred but is not always attainable. This perspective examines the role of ordinary citizens in the democratic process (Goldfrank, 2005). Participatory democracy implies that board participation of constituents suggests that they are in power. The effective management of the participation and representation polarities pair contributes to a participatory democracy.

Deliberative Democracy occurs when public reasoning focuses on the common

good in the deliberative conception of democracy (Coppedge, 2011). Deliberative democracy focuses on the art of deliberation (Chappell, 2011). Consensus decision-making and majority rule are both accepted if the decision is reached through deliberation. Of the various degrees of democracy, the deliberative degree seems relative to each of the five polarity pairs. The key element in this approach is decision-making, and decision-making is vital to social change. In applying Johnson's polarity management model to the various degrees of democracy and to the polarity pairs of the polarities of democracy model, framework for social change can allow for the maximization of the positive aspects of each polarity pair while minimizing the negative aspects of each pair (Benet, 2013).

Egalitarian Democracy focuses on political equality (Coppedge, 2011). Equal participation, equal representation, and equal protection are valuable principles of egalitarianism. In other words, people should receive the same treatment or opportunities (Allan, 2013).

These conceptions of democracy do not examine distinctions between direct and representative democracy. The list also fails to address normative theories of democracy and realist versus ideal theories of democracy. It does, however, provide a succinct analysis of current debates on democracy. Gaining consensus on the definition of democracy is not likely to occur. Coppedge (2011) identified thirty-three indicators relevant to understanding democracy. The presence of these diverse terms helps to establish the difficulty of establishing a single acceptable term for democracy. The

indicators that were selected are relevant to one or more of the initial search terms found in Chapter 1.

*Access to media and campaign finance:* Access to media and campaign finance greatly impacts how widespread a candidate's ideas are to the electorate (Coppedge, 2011). This conception of democracy refers to the extent to which candidates have equal access to media and campaign finance based on their proportional support in their electorate (p. 26).

*Authority:* Authority is based on who has jurisdiction over a region (Coppedge, 2011). As a conception, it refers to the extent to which a political agency has power and jurisdiction over a territory (Philp, 2001).

*Civil liberty:* Civil liberty organizations focus on the rights and freedoms of individuals and groups of people. In this context, it refers to the right to individual freedoms against government control (Schmidt, 2016). An example includes enjoying freedom of speech (Coppedge, 2011).

*Direct democracy:* A system of government where constituents have a direct role in electing officials. The opportunities that citizens must directly participate in policymaking such as through referendum (Kokkinidis, 2012).

*Ethnic equality:* Ethnic equality is an example of a civil liberty that democracies focus on protecting (Coppedge, 2011). It refers to the extent to which traditionally underprivileged groups of people gain equal opportunity to vote and/or participate in the electoral process as candidates (Sutterlüty, 2010).

*Female suffrage:* Women have not always been treated equally compared to men. The term suffrage focuses on voting rights in general, but female suffrage focuses on the extent to which women have the right to vote (Lind, 1994). The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution barred voting discrimination based on sex giving women the legal right to vote.

*Inclusive citizenship:* This term is one of the most relevant to this research as it focuses on the degree to which all citizens can enjoy the freedoms and liberties as outlined by law (Coppedge, 2011; Kapai, 2012).

*Male suffrage:* Male suffrage is also a democratic conception in some nations. It is extent to which men have the right to vote (Coppedge, 2011).

*Religious freedoms:* This concept is also explicitly relevant to this research. Religious freedoms refer to the extent to which people have the freedom to participate in a religion of their choice (Alon & Chase, 2005; Coppedge, 2011).

*Subnational government elections:* Elections occur at various levels of government. These elections refer to extent to which state, regional, and other territories (Department of Homeland Security, 2017) use free and fair practices to elect officials (Coppedge, 2011). The focus is not on the outcome but is on the processes and procedures leading up to the outcome.

*Turnout:* Voter turnout refers to extent to which people participate in voting (Coppedge, 2011). Even though male suffrage and female suffrage are conceptions in democratic societies, other factors impact voter turnout as well. Some of these factors may be related to other conceptions such as religious freedoms and ethnic equality.

*Unevenness in democratic development:* Voter turnout could directly turnout especially if some subnational government elections are respectful of civil liberties than others (Coppedge, 2011).

Because democracy embodies various indicators, the frame for understanding democracy can be challenging; however, I am focusing on perspective of democracy as it relates to justice. Benet (2013) recognized the absence of a definition of democracy to guide social change efforts although people around the world have embraced the potential impact it can have on addressing concerns about the environment, economy, and military (p. 26); however, researchers can overcome this challenge by narrowing the focus and application of research principles of democracy.

### **9/11 and the Government's Response and the Resulting Impact**

Congress passed the APA to unify and strengthen the country by providing access to appropriate tools to mitigate and obstruct future acts of terrorism (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). Before 9/11, American citizens did not feel that a terrorist attack of that nature would take place (Kashan, 2009). However, the reality of it all was that the attack of 9/11 was more realistic than ever. Armed with a feeling of fear, hurt, and even anger, the Senate passed the USA Patriot Act with a 99-1 vote (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). Coupled with overwhelming support in the United States House of Representatives, the APA established four norms with priority given to using tools already available.

The APA appealed to legislators as a dominant response to 9/11 based on the overwhelming and unanimous Senate vote; however, it was not without immediate



controversy. Public outcry struck as many American citizens felt that the legislation was directly targeting civil liberties guaranteed through the United States Constitution (Levin, 2007; Mac Donald, 2004; Sekvon, 2003). Unlike other pieces of legislation, the act was rushed foregoing the usual legislative procedures such as agency review, open hearings for the public, floor debates and mark ups, conference reporting in the Senate and House (Wong, 2006). For many, the legislation gave the green light for a full blown, bipartisan agenda (Dohrn, 2003).

The First and Fourth Amendments are frequently referred to in court cases where the liberties of the defendants are challenged; the APA strengthens the likelihood that such liberties will continue to be directly affected by the continued implementation of the legislation (U.S Department of Justice, 2016). Such provisions which grant warrantless search and seizure of personal documents and materials as well as the use of warrantless wiretaps and roving wiretaps have caused the debate to continue. While American citizens have argued against this legislation, it is important to note that Arab American Muslims are American citizens and have been affected more than any other group of American citizens (Aroian, 2012). More than seven hundred acts of hate violence against Arab Americans were documented post 9/11 (Arioan, 2012; Sekhon, 2003; Zogby, 2002). As of December 2016, those numbers have increased dramatically with statistical information continuously changing.

After it was identified that the responsible individuals of the carried-out terrorist attacks were Islamic extremists, the views and opinions of the Muslim community quickly changed (Rashid, 2009). It was now which the American Muslim population felt

that their lives, as simple as they may have once been, would forever change. They would forever change as new emergence of modern racial and religious discrimination/profiling against them would most certainly take place simply due to the provisions within the APA. More specifically, young adult American Muslims who were between the ages of four and eleven at the time the attacks took place are now being faced with the realistic experiences of dealing with the negative consequences of those attacks through their experiences of racial and religious discrimination and profiling.

The religious and racial discrimination and profiling of American Muslims have increased since the attacks of 9/11 and the implementation of the APA (Aroian, 2012; Sekhon, 2003). Immediately following the passage of the APA, more than 600 complaints were filed through the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which most of those filed complaints alleged religious discrimination (Zogby, 2002, p. 7). Thus, the immediate impact of such legislation has been more directed toward the younger generation of American Muslims. Researchers have found that Americans have treated immigrants and other individuals of other descents with discrimination and profiling in response to other historical events.

***Historical Examples of Profiling.*** During the onset of World War II, the United States military aggressively responded in several ways. President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which authorized legal discriminate against Japanese Americans and move them to internment camps (Pitt, 2001). The government moved more than 110,000 Japanese-Americans to internment camps after Roosevelt signed the Executive Order. Inouye, the son of a Japanese immigrant, was a senior in high school when he

recalled seeing three Japanese planes fly overhead (PBS, 2007). He knew that his life was about to change forever. Government leaders wanted to place all Japanese-Americans living in Hawaii in the internment camps as well, but wealthy individuals opposed. Within two months, Japanese-Americans living on the West coast were herded and transported to cramped barracks in Arizona, Utah, California, Wyoming, Arkansas, Idaho, or California (Jardins, 2010). The government also froze the assets of the Issei, first generation immigrants, and the FBI started monitoring Japanese community leaders with strong ties Japanese ties (PBS, 2007). The government also imposed strict curfews and raided their homes searching for contraband.

Civil liberties organizations demanded that the Executive Order be rescinded; however, President Roosevelt did not comply (Jardins, 2010). In 1948, the federal government issued \$37 million in reparations, and in 1988 Congress issued an apology and issued an additional \$20,000 to surviving internees. Similarly, several researchers are beginning to uncover that American Muslims are being mistreated post 9/11.

Expanding further on the mistreatment of American Muslims, Bonet (2011) articulated the point in which young American Muslims have been exposed to the negative discrimination which has been a result of the APA. Bonet explained that American Muslims attending colleges and universities were subject to having most, if not all, of their student records and other information seized while attending school (p. 47). This is particularly due to investigations conducted by the US government about the student's family and/or individual self, in response to their respective relationship with either terrorist activity or a known terrorist supporter.

Additionally, Bonet (2011) discussed further challenges related to the involvement of American Muslim youth because of their religious and racial identification. While focused more specifically on American Muslim youth in the public-school sector, Bonet indicated that American Muslim youth in schools are usually bullied and targeted by their adversaries when wearing the traditional “hijab” or when having trouble pronouncing words (p. 49). Understanding that American Muslim youth were faced with much more challenges with identifying with their respective culture, the challenges having to face discrimination and profiling because of the attacks of 9/11 and the referenced legislation are more prominent within the American Muslim youth than among the older generation. This conversation of the challenges presented amongst American Muslim youth could indicate that the diversity and equality polarity pair has not been managed well.

***Examples of Previous Research.*** Several researchers have examined the impact of profiling and discrimination on American Muslims. The political atmosphere of the American culture has a great impact on what is acceptable and what creates anxiety and fear. After 9/11, various government agencies increased monitoring and surveillance of American Muslims (O’Conner & Jahan, 2014). Best and Krueger (2011) examined how American Muslims positively correlated government monitoring with political participation. Their hypothesis was that increased government monitoring increased anger and anxiety. American Muslim participants correlated anger with positive political activity and anxiety with negative political engagement. Best and Krueger surveyed American Muslims to determine their emotional response to government surveillance.

After coding and analyzing the results, the researchers identified profiling as an emerging theme.

In contrast, in a similar study, O’Conner and Jahan (2014) found that anxiety levels were more prominent than emotions of fear. Various researchers have examined how stigma and social identity threats demonstrates avoidance behaviors and can serve as a recourse for avoiding being discriminated against (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998; Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002; Goffman, 1963; Pinel, 1999; Steele, 1997; Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998). The research about social identity threats suggest that American Muslims are more vigilant about their surroundings especially when they are around Americans who are not Muslims and fellow American Muslims (O’Conner & Jahan, 2014, p. 97).

O’Conner and Jahan (2014) used background information about avoidance behaviors to examine the prevalence of participant experiences with government surveillance. Of the 110 participants who met the research criteria, 18% reported personal experience with government surveillance (O’Conner & Jahan, 2014). Their findings were consistent with other researchers who examined the same phenomenon among American Muslims (Abu-Ras, & Suárez, 2009; Rippey & Newman, 2006). Using MANOVA to differentiate between those who reported personal experience with government surveillance and those who did not share the reported experience. Reports of anger were high but were not consistent with perceptions of being surveyed. Studies about surveillance and profiling help to establish a context for the vigilance and anxiety of American Muslims who have personally experienced perceived profiling.

Profiling was an emerging theme in Best and Krueger's (2011) and O'Conner and Jahan's (2014) research; however, Fadda-Conrey (2011) and Pitt (2011) examined discrimination and profiling as research variables. They suggested that information on provisions as outlined in the APA inadvertently cause discrimination and profiling against American Muslims as a community.

Aroian (2012) also noted that the level of discrimination and profiling was evident amongst young Muslim Americans. More specifically, the level of discrimination seen through the Muslim American youth community also increased after the attacks of 9/11 and through the continued legislation which targets the rights of American Muslims (Aroian, 2012). Thus, self-identification for American Muslim youths and young adults take on the traditional customs of identification with the Muslim faith which have been targeted. In a separate study, Pasha-Zaidi (2015) indicated that the traditional Muslim wearing of the "hijab" has constituted more racial discrimination in the United States than the United Kingdom by a large margin. The views of the Muslim community were directly affected because of the attacks and the implementation of the legislation as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) indicates that approximately 500 complaints for religious discrimination was recorded from the day of the attacks to spring of 2002 (Pasha-Zaidi, 2015).

Using ethnographic methods, researchers have attempted to understand how racial and religious discrimination has affected American Muslims. Fadda-Conrey (2011) used the personal story of an American Muslim who explains the attacks of 9/11 and how she was immediately viewed. In short, Fadda-Conrey used this individual's personal story to

identify the current problem with outside views of Islam/Muslim faith based individuals (Fadda-Conrey, 2011). The result of the attacks of 9/11 and the implementation of the APA may have attributed to the creation of negative thoughts and/or views regarding Muslims and those of the Islamic faith. Kayaoglu (2012) identified the term “Islamophobia” as the root behind the negative attitudes and opinions of American Muslims. The term “Islamophobia” as specified by Kayaoglu (2012) is a term used which closely associates with racism and is often seen through those that falsely accuse or treat Muslims in a matter which is different from others (p.612). Further research has indicated that this theory/term (Islamophobia) has increased in Western Countries, such as the United States and is often associated with the traditional wear of Islamic hijab and dress (Pasha-Zaidi, 2015, p. 71). Additionally, research conducted in 2010, indicated that approximately 49 percent of American citizens held unfavorable opinions and views on Muslims due to the attacks of September 11, considerably higher than before the attacks took place in 2001 (Bayoumi, 2011, p. 16).

### **Emerging Themes**

Three emerging themes were identified in the review of literature: discrimination, profiling, and hate crimes. In addition, perspectives of discrimination and profiling are the focus of the research.

#### **Discrimination and Profiling**

Audi (2008) outlined the challenges that Arab Americans face from a legal perspective. These challenges include racial discrimination, hate crimes, racial profiling, and workplace discrimination. Discrimination includes any unjust, unethical, or immoral

treatment of people based on their cultural heritage, race, age, or sex (Keene, 2011). As such, researchers have used social construction theory as a framework to understand how oppressive policies impact target population. In reviewing the literature, the social construction theory as it relates to target populations seems to address the contention discussed earlier that structural forces create conditions of oppression.

In a letter to the editor of the London-Arabic language daily, *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, a Saudi woman, provided her sentiments regarding American social constructions of Arabs (Rabassa et al., 2004, p. 112). In the letter, the author developed the premise that Islamic values were engrained in the minds of young Muslims essentially from birth. Merely because they are responsible, dedicated, and downright obligated to carry forth the principles of their faith regardless of the cost (Rabassa et al., 2004). Furthermore, Rabassa et al. (2004) highlighted Al-Sharq al-Awsat's feelings that western cultures are associated with deprivation of the strength that is embedded in Islamic culture due to the preaching and teachings of Islam on every corner. The social constructions of Arabs paved the way for policies impacting Arab Americans and for American perceptions of Arab Americans.

Social construction theory in this context primarily focuses on the impact of discrimination and profiling on young adult Arab Muslims. Racial profiling and discrimination have been long-standing concerns in the criminal justice system. People of color and non-Christians (Cainkar, 2009) are usually the targets of discrimination and profiling despite the goal of democracy being ethnic equality, inclusive citizenship, and



religious freedom (Coppedge, 2011). Since discrimination and profiling still exists, it is beneficial to discuss the sources these injustices.

### **Hate Crimes**

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a hate crime includes any criminal offenses that committed against a person, property, or society in where there is bias based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity (Audi, 2008). The Department of Justice is required to collect statistics on the prevalence of hate crimes. In 2016, the largest number of cases categorized as “General Community Relations” cases were hate crimes (Department of Justice, 2016). Hate crimes accounted for 44 out of 123 cases. General Community Relations cases are those that arise from conflict in the community and are not attributed to issues with either law enforcement or education.

### **Sources of Discrimination, Profiling, and Hate Crimes**

Dweik (2008) explains that people’s opinions can be positively or negatively developed through television, radio, and movies. Social media now plays an even more avid role in public perspective. Because of exposure, people in general are more apt to accept portrayals as the law. The attitudes towards Arab Muslims were negative, chilling, destabilizing, and frightening; these are the perspectives that emerged in research interviews Cainkar (2009) had with participating Arab Muslims. The lived experiences of Arab American Muslims living in America were based on social constructions paralleling their relationships to the attacks instead of the attacks alone. Social constructions regarding Arabs and Muslims were already in place pre-9/11 and established common culpability meaning that Arab American Muslims silently agreed

with the attacks or were involved with possible sleeper cells (Cainkar, 2009). Social constructions associating a propensity to violence, a disposition towards terrorism, and hatred of America also strengthened the belief that Arab American Muslims were a threat and such belief magnified as it gained public support (p. 64).

Americans created symbolic associations of Arab American Muslims meaning that any dark-skinned, dark-haired Arabs, Muslims, or Easterners who dressed or spoke like an Arab were a perceived threat and ultimately resulted in the death of Arab American Muslims post-9/11 (Cainkar, 2009, p. 64). These particular symbolic associations may suggest that the equality aspect of the diversity and equality pair was not managed well. Cainkar compares such radicalization to the treatment of black men walking through white neighborhoods, yet, to a degree some of the prejudices and biases existed long before 9/11 due to association with radicals from similar countries of origin and culture. In arguing that American views on Arabs and Muslims were negative pre-9/11, Cainkar can establish how 9/11 solidified widespread public support for government agencies to establish collective policies aimed at Arabs and Muslims.

Such social constructions were not limited to the interactions of Arab Americans and Arab American Muslims in the public. The perceptions leaked over into the workforce as well. Daraiseh (2012) analyzed the effects of Arab Americans discrimination post 9/11 from the perspective of workplace and education social constructions. Arab Americans admittedly were targeted more as public support increased towards eliminating terrorism. The Equal Economic Opportunity Commission received more complaints regarding increased public harassment, hate mail, and

workplace discrimination in 2001. Khan and Eukland (2012) examined the situational attitudes of Muslim Americans from the context of social desirability and universal orientation. Khan and Eukland recruited 208 participants from a California State University finding that such negative attitudes were more specific than global. Nevertheless, the pre-established social constructions regarding Arabs and Arab Muslims predicated the treatment of Arab American Muslims and Arab Americans post-9/11.

### **Examples of Discrimination, Profiling, and Hate Crimes**

Several cases were reported to the Department of Justice (2016) that were examples of either discrimination, profiling, or hate against Muslims. The cases that are found here represent some of those from the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions:

- In Kingston, Rhode Island, Community Related Services (CRS) was consulted in response to increased community tensions after a local mosque was vandalized with graffiti and broken windows on July 14, 2016 (p. 28). CRS was needed to establish a working group between Muslim community groups and local law enforcement.
- On May 11, 2016, the CRS was consulted in Medford, Massachusetts, to calm tensions due to the cancellation of a student led demonstration to support the rights of Muslim women. The students wanted to gain support for Muslim women who decided to wear their hijabs as an expression of their religious identity.
- In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the CRS facilitated dialogue for a forum enabling Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities to discuss allegations of racial profiling by

the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) (p. 32). A community member reported that members of these ethnic groups were subject to additional screening which caused delayed re-entry back into the country. In addition, others reported an increase in hate crimes against members of their community.

These cases only represent those occurring within the past year; however, they provide insight about cases of discrimination, profiling, and hate that have been reported to the Department of Justice. These cases helped me to frame questions for my face-to-face interviews and have provided a context for being knowledgeable and empathetic about potential responses and the potential for anxiety or anger as (Abu-Ras & Suárez, 2009; O'Conner & Jahan, 2014; Rippy & Newman, 2006). These cases also helped me to address the relevant elements of the polarities of democracy in framing the questions.

### **Recent Surveys about American Muslim Perspectives**

The Pew Research Center conducts surveys on an annual basis of target populations. The particular surveys of interest involve American Muslims and their perceptions of life in America and their interactions with other Americans. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey between January 23, 2017 and May 2, 2017 about the concerns of the American Muslims (Diamant, 2017). They surveyed 1,001 American Muslims finding that the American Muslim community continues to face challenges. These challenges include discrimination, misconceptions about Islam, and negative media portrayals. Negative media portrayals are outlined separately from President Trump's views of American Muslims, which is also listed as a challenge.

Seventy-five percent of American Muslim respondents shared that there was a lot of discrimination against Muslims in the United States (Diamant, 2017). Their views were consistent with the 69% of Americans who shared the same view. In addition, Muslim women were more likely than men to have this view of discrimination. The comparison was 83% for American Muslim women and 68% for American Muslim men. Other challenges were identified including distrust of Muslims (6%), stereotyping about Muslims (5%), harassment (5%), financial issues (1%), and religious issues between Muslims and non-Muslims (1%). Some respondents said that there were no issues (9%).

Understanding the perceptions of American Muslims continues to be of importance as the population of Muslims in the United States continues to increase annually. To date, identification as a Muslim continues to be among the fastest growing religion world-wide and in the United States (Lipka, 2017). There are currently roughly 3.35 million Muslims living in the United States which currently accounts for 1% of the population. It is estimated that the percentage will exceed 2% of the total population by year 2050. The Pew Research Center examined the most recent U.S. Census data citing two notable trends. The first was that Muslims have more children than people of other religions (Lipka, 2017); the second was that the median age for Muslims (24) is seven years younger than the median age for non-Muslims.

It is also worth noting that Muslims have negative perceptions of Westerners in general. All of this information allowed me to consciously consider my actions during the interviews. Muslims view Westerners as selfish (median of 68%), violent (66%), greedy (64%), immoral (61%), and arrogant (57%). Respondents of the survey also

identified positive characteristics including respectful of women (44%), honest (33%), tolerant (31%), and generous (29%). It was important to use the most appropriate language and depict welcoming body language in the face-to-face interviews.

### **Summary**

The primary focus of this review was to establish a foundation for the cultural quest for evidence of the lived experiences of Arab American Muslims pre-and post-9/11. However, given the nature of American politics and governance, it is imperative to establish a context for understanding the democratic decision-making processes towards policy making and policy design. In creating policies directly impacting target populations it is also equality imperative to understand the social constructs that lend way to policy creation. Events such as 9/11 have had a direct correlational impact to policies enacted to fight terrorism domestically and abroad, and without exploration and explanation of the context of such policies, they would seem downright discriminatory.

In examining different perspectives on democracy and the sources of discrimination and profiling, there is still a gap in literature regarding the unique perspectives of young adult Arab American Muslims who have experienced such discrimination and profiling. This study identified the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area since the passage of the APA. A segment of the Polarities of Democracy was used to analyze those results to determine if the one or more pairs could be more effectively managed to obtain greater democracy by suggesting changes in public policy. In chapter three, I describe the qualitative

phenomenological approach to interview young adult Arab American Muslims from the District of Columbia's metropolitan area to gain their perspectives on the impact of social constructions on their lives.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a description of the research design and rationale, methodology, criteria for sample selection, data collection method, analysis, interpretation of data, role of the researcher, and participation selection criteria. Chapter 3 also includes details for obtaining informed consent and ethical considerations pertaining to the study. As mentioned, this study was phenomenological in nature. The research question that guided this research was what are the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area since the passage of the APA?

### **Research Design and Rationale**

Qualitative research is an exploratory approach to investigating how experiences have impacted people and are articulated through different investigative research methods what these experiences mean to them (Golafshani, 2003; Merriam, 2009). Additionally, qualitative research is particularly valuable for the identification of underlying opinions, reasons, and motivations (Golafshani, 2003). Moustakas (1994) discussed different models for gathering human perspectives in qualitative research. Each of these models uses various qualitative research methodologies: ethnography, grounded theory, hermeneutics, empirical phenomenological research, and heuristic research; however, this research employed empirical phenomenological research because it lends opportunities



for reflective structural analysis of the experiences of the target population for the development of general meanings (see Moustakas, 1994).

Further investigating qualitative research methodology, Schwandt (2015) offered specific situations for using qualitative research. Ultimately, qualitative research allows researchers to understand meanings from the perspectives of participants (Schwandt, 2015). These meanings are based on specific events, situations, or actions that they are involved in or have experience with. Qualitative research also allows researchers to understand the context of such experiences and the influences these experiences have on participants (Golafshani, 2003). Such research also allows the researcher to identify unanticipated phenomena and influences which can bring about new grounded theories. Finally, qualitative research assists with understanding the process by which events take place and the development of causal relationships and explanations (Creswell, 2007).

Phenomenological research is a specific type of qualitative research that investigates people's experiences as it relates to specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 2004). Per Merriam (2004) pure phenomenological research focuses on descriptions instead of explanations. Using this lens, this research described the populations' feelings and experiences regarding discrimination and profiling.

Qualitative methods are similar in their approach but vary regarding the type of information that is essentially produced (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). Despite these similarities, the phenomenological approach offered the strongest and richest sources of information for addressing the gap in literature and answers the

selected research question. By using the qualitative phenomenological research method, I was able to establish a forum for collecting the experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims who were living in the United States pre-and post-9/11.

### **My Role as Researcher**

As the researcher, I was responsible for selecting participants for this research. One of the seven steps for conducting human science research is the sampling method for participant participation (Moustakas, 1993). I developed a set of questions to guide the interview process. Once institutional review board (IRB) approval was obtained, I advertised for participation throughout various locations within the District of Columbia Metropolitan area (Appendix C). I also explained the context of this research to ensure that participants know how their responses will be used. In order to participate, participants needed to provide consent by completing the consent form. Essentially, it was imperative for participants to understand that their experiences will be evaluated individually and collectively to identify trends. Once those participants were identified I conducted face-to-face interviews using the Interview Protocol found in Appendix B which were recorded and transcribed. Each participant was provided a transcript of their responses as a method to ensure that responses have been accurately recorded. To maintain confidentiality of the responses, I assigned each participant a code (P1, P2...) instead of using the participant's names. At the completion of the transcribed data being produced, it was uploaded into NVivo. Lastly, I organized and analyzed the data to develop structural meanings.

## **Methodology**

The methodology used in this research was based on qualitative underpinnings and relies on the researcher as the primary collector of data. It has also been described as the study of the description of methods or the systematic study of methods that has been applied within a discipline. This section outlines participant selection logic; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and data analysis from the qualitative frame.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

The site for the selection of these participants was the District of Columbia Metropolitan area. This area was selected for this study due to the high level of Arab American Muslim young adults currently in their undergraduate and graduate studies. Additionally, young professionals located within the District of Columbia Metropolitan area were identified for potential selection for participation in this study using RDS with criterion sample for the cohort, poster recruitment, and organization assistance for recruitment of research participants. I posted flyers in common areas such as restaurants, public transportation locations, and coffee shops about the study. Because I was working with a population that might be skeptical of anyone wanting to ask them questions, participants' referred contacts directly instead of providing a name for me to contact. RDS offered a level of trust which was needed when working with a group of participants which may have been skeptical to engage in this research.

The details of the study were included on the flyer using criterion sampling as seen in Appendix C. The age group for this study was 18-25 due to the level of social

interaction and other social acceptance issues that reside within this age group. This can highlight greater dealings with the phenomenon due this type of settings.

### **Instrumentation**

Instrumentation is the course of action that researchers use to develop, test, and use a research instrument (Creswell, 2007; Golafshani, 2003). Participant interviews were used as the data collection instrument with an outline of potential questions to guide the direction of the interviews and adjustments were made as needed based on participant responses and the flow of the conversation. The interview questions found in Appendix B were researcher developed and included questions based on the research variables and emerging topics in the review of literature. The questions also aligned with polarities of democracy pair (diversity and equality) by aligning certain interview questions with negative and positive aspects of diversity or equality. This is shown in the preliminary coding framework presented in Table 2. In interviewing 14 participants, there was enough data presented to answer the research question. Additionally, the interview questions are culturally relevant to the targeted sample. In a few instances, I asked additional questions to gather more information due to the participants' initial response.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

As the researcher, I met with each participant, reviewed the purpose and direction of the research and gave each the opportunity to agree to the terms or terminate participation. For the participants which wished to continue with the study, I proceeded with the questions using the participant responses to guide the flow of the interview. For example, some questions were asked out of order due to participant responses. Each

interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. I used an audio recording device to record participant responses and took notes during the process as well. At the conclusion of each interview, I asked the participants if they wanted to share any further information or ask any questions. Additionally, I took extensive time to transcribe the data and provided the participants with a copy in which they were able to make any necessary adjustments within two weeks of the initial interview session. Participants for this study had the right to discontinue the interview during any point during the interview session without having to provide an explanation.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

As the research strategy relied on interview responses, the use of NVivo was the data analysis software tool used during the final phase of the research. NVivo computer-based software provided the ability to manage a substantive amount of qualitative data collected which included interviews, official document retrieval, notes, research articles, and observation notes. Within this software, coding methods were conducted by me in order to identify descriptive themes and relationships. Furthermore, to ensure validity and reliability of the interview responses, there were audio and video recordings of the initial interview sessions while also incorporating member checking.

Coding is an essential process for data analysis in qualitative research and symbolic representations of summative data (Merriam, 2009; Saldaña, 2013). The use of coding allowed me to relay and retell the stories of research participants using a storyline. In addition, these codes created patterns that allowed for the development of categories within the context of what is being studied. Because these patterns are developed in

context, they cannot be viewed in isolation as they develop meaning to the data. The coding process was cyclical and was essential to reaffirming findings. Codes link from the data but reflect to the idea and back to the data again. As researchers extract key concepts from the data, they become familiar with the data and can reflect and develop meaning of participant responses (Saldaña, 2013). This research relied on pattern coding to analyze the data. Pattern coding allowed me to find repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in participant responses.

Table 2 Preliminary Coding Framework

Parent code	Child Code	Interview question/s
Diversity	Culture, inclusion, participation, respect and disrespect	All
Equality	Inclusion, participation, Disrespect and respect	All

The preliminary coding framework (Table 2) outlines the codes that I identified based on Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory. Included in Table 2.0 are parent codes, related child codes, and the associated research questions. While the polarities of democracy were focused on as a whole, I addressed the diversity and equality pair for this study. Additionally, it is important to note that additional polarity pairs emerged after conducting interviews.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Because qualitative researchers involve themselves in the research process unlike quantitative researchers, it is important to address issues related to trustworthiness—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Trustworthiness examines

whether the results of the qualitative study are worth paying attention to (Benet, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are used to address reliability and validity concerns relative to qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003).

### **Credibility**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. For the results to be credible they must also be believable. Results are creditable when data is rich and methods such as triangulation are used to verify accuracy (Benet, 2014; Creswell, 2007; Golafshani, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, data collected and analyzed from the interviews were triangulated using member checking, thick descriptions, and transcriptions from audio of the participants to further describe their experiences with the phenomenon and interviews with selected participants to strengthen the findings of the research. By conducting this method of triangulation of data it allowed me to deal with potential issues of creditability.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied beyond the boundaries of the study (Benet, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To determine if research is transferable, the researcher must supply thick descriptions of participants' experiences. Thick description of the research and its methods allows for comparisons of similar situations (Creswell, 2007). Thick descriptions supplement context with behavior to make the behavior meaningful to outsiders. This process supplied me with

opportunities to strengthen my ability to connect patterns of culture and social relationships in the coding process.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the extent to which the research findings are consistent and can be repeated (Benet, 2014; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this research, I accounted for every changing context within the study by using handwritten notes, audio and sources of reference. Member checking was helpful determining changes in context as the information was summarized and presented to the participant within two weeks of completion of the initial face-to-face interview.

### **Confirmability**

It was important to check and recheck data throughout the process to strengthen confirmability. Confirmability refers to the measures by which the findings and interpretations are supported by the data (Benet, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research, the researcher brings their own perspectives to the research. Understanding that, researcher biases could be a threat to confirmability (Creswell, 2007). I offered continuous opportunities for reflection by restating responses and conducting a follow up with participants within a couple of weeks as a form of member checking and confirmation.

## **Ethical Concerns and Procedures**

Developing trust between the researcher and research participants is a major priority of any research (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Haverkamp, 2005). The research in this section addresses how qualitative research can produce ethical concerns (Arminio &



Hultgren, 2002; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To address the concerns related to trust, this research strictly adhered to all IRB guidelines which are placed on the Walden University Dissertation checklist. I obtained written permission from the IRB to conduct research; clearly identified the objectives, data collection methods, and processes of the research to participants; obtained written permission from participants who volunteer to be interviewed; transcribed data for participant verification; and provided each participant with a draft of the results for review and verification. Additionally, all participants were assured that all information pertaining to their identities would be confidential and not released in the dissertation.

Since I do not have a personal identification with the Arab Muslim community, it was important for me to establish trust with research participants. The use of the RDS method was particularly helpful for finding research participants who identify with the predefined participant demographics; however, there was still concern about cultural barriers between the researcher and participants. I used this sampling method along with criterion sampling (posted flyers) as a method of participants providing a linkage to other members of the population that were suitable for this study. In examining research ethics, I assured the participants throughout the process that their participation was voluntary. During initial interview and follow-up interview sessions, I addressed each participant by their name; however, I coded each participant by their responses to avoid linking participant responses to the actual participant. Identifiable data was kept throughout the completion of member checking and was destroyed after verification of

responses. All raw data will remain in a secure location in my home office for a period of 5 years. The anticipated risk of participation was deemed to be insignificant.

### **Summary**

This research employed phenomenological principles to gain insight from young Arab American Muslim Adults who lived in the United States pre-and post-9/11. The previous chapters introduced the significance and scope of the research and established applicable theoretical frameworks to substantiate a need for the research. In this section, I outlined my role as a researcher and the steps I took to gain perspectives from targeted participants. As the researcher, I limited my sharing with research participants with the goal of minimizing researcher bias.

The interviewees were selected from the greater District of Columbia Metropolitan area which has a plethora of potential participants who met the criteria for the sample. I placed flyers in the library with information about the study and the target population for the study. Additionally, participants in the professional field who fell within the stated age group of this study were also selected to participate in this study. In developing trust with participants, I clearly related my interests in addressing gaps in literature and research regarding the Arab American Muslim population. I employed various measures of trustworthiness to strengthen findings and interpretations. Overall, this research was critical for providing insight on how policy design and policy implementation of the APA impacted the lives of young adult Arab American Muslims. In the next chapter I provide results to the research question.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to examine the experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of young adult Arab American Muslims using Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory and Johnson's (1996) polarities management concepts to simplify complex issues related to democracy and equality. The phenomenological techniques used in this study involved conducting one-on-one interviews with participants in order to gain a thorough depiction of their realities as they interacted among groups with commonalities and more diverse populations. Findings were compiled using descriptive and interpretive language as I sought to provide an answer to the central research question.

### **Central Research Question**

What are the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims between the ages of 18 and 25, regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area since the passage of the APA?

To address this issue, a phenomenological approach was used to investigate the impact of the phenomenon on the sample population using semi structured interview questions. This chapter is a representation of the results of the data collection procedures, demographic descriptions of participants, the processes of data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results of the study.

### Participant Demographic Data

The sample for this study included 14 young adults who self-identified as Arab American Muslim. In order to meet research standards of confidentiality, each participant is identified and designated with the letter P (for participant) and a corresponding number based on the order in which they interviewed (P1, P2, P3, etc.). Order of participation was based on scheduling and availability. The participants included both males and females ranging between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. The employment status of participants is provided in Table 1. Table 1 also shows the age distribution of individual study participants.

Table 1

*Participant Demographics: Employment Status, Gender, & Age*

Participant	Employment Status	Gender	Age
P1	Undergraduate Student	Female	19
P2	Undergraduate Student	Female	19
P3	Undergraduate Student	Female	20
P4	Undergraduate Student	Female	21
P5	Employed	Female	22
P6	Undergraduate Student	Female	25
P7	Graduate Student	Female	25
P8	Undergraduate Student	Male	19
P9	Undergraduate Student	Male	20
P10	Graduate Student	Male	22
P11	Employed	Male	23
P12	Graduate Student	Male	23
P13	Employed	Male	25
P14	Employed/Online Student	Male	25

### The Data Collection Process

In order to conduct this research, I first had to gain permission from local establishments to post flyers in high volume traffic areas in the DMV including areas

around nearby campuses, major corporations, and shopping malls to gain participants. In addition, I also relied on RDS to gain access to other potential participants. It was quite difficult to access 15 participants because I was seeking participants who met three criteria based on age, religion, and ethnicity. The study concluded with 14 participants.

## **Interviews**

Appendix B is an outline of the order that questions were asked and answered during the interview process. P1 was the first participant to contact me regarding participation in the study. P2-P4 also called about participating in the study based on the flyer posted at one of the universities. P5-P14 was obtained through interactions with P1-P4. Because the questions were designed to probe and gain further insight and were specifically relevant based on experience, some participants did not answer certain questions. The most commonly unanswered question was Q6:

What do you believe to be the reasons why you have not experienced the same level, or any discrimination or profiling as other individuals may have?

During the interview process, I listened carefully to determine if the participant would be asked this question as only participants who had not experienced discrimination or profiling were asked this question. This question was inapplicable to 10 out of 14 participants. The interview process was more like a conversation than an interview because I wanted to ensure that each participant was comfortable in sharing their responses.

I contacted each participant by telephone. P1-P4 initially reached out to me after seeing the flyer posted in one of the highly frequented areas in the DC Metropolitan area.

I introduced myself to participants P1-P4 and provided more insight about the nature of the study. After reviewing the purpose and nature I also scheduled the participant's interview in a secluded room at the previously reserved at a local library. Before ending the phone call, I ensured each participant that their responses and participation in the study would remain confidential, and I also asked if they knew of others who would be potentially interested in participation.

At the beginning of each audiotape I identified each participant by their participant code and wrote the corresponding code on all notes. This enabled me to accurately match each participant's response with the corresponding notes. The first 15 minutes of the interview was used to explain to the participants their responsibilities and rights as outlined by Walden's IRB policies and guidelines. Study participants were given an opportunity to review the consent form, ask questions, and sign. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask lingering questions about the study. Participants were notified that the outcomes would be shared with them and other interested stakeholders. None of the participants declined participation. Each interview lasted a maximum of 90 minutes. I wrote down the time of the start of each interview and strategically placed a clocked behind the participant to reference as a time keeper. I spent approximately 45 minutes asking questions and listening to responses and the remaining minutes allowing each participant to verify their responses.

Participants were also given the option of taking a break or stopping the interview if they felt uncomfortable at any point. The location of the interviews was at a public library; however, the room was discreetly located in a corner free from distractions,

noises, and obstructions. The participants were reminded that the interview would last for approximately 90 minutes. None of the participants were apprehensive about discussing their lived experiences without hesitation and expressed their views on discrimination and profiling without reservation.

Fourteen face-to-face interviews with 12 open ended questions (Appendix B) were conducted over an 8-week period. The participant and I were the only two individuals in the room. Some interviews were very serious and stoic, while others were like an informal conversation. The personality of the interviewee greatly impacted the tone and mood of the interviews. I purposely used informal conversation to ensure that each participant felt comfortable in the interview.

The interviews were logged on a voice recorder and subsequently stored on a laptop. Using the audio files, each interview was transcribed verbatim into a document file. Participants gave their consent to be recorded when they signed the consent form. The audio recordings provided 21 hours of oral data primarily focused on the participants' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about profiling and discrimination. I recorded up to three paragraphs of notes for each participant to ensure that I could capture their body language and nonverbal communication throughout the interview. The handwritten notes and audio recordings are secured and locked in a keyless entry safe located in home. I am the only person with access to the safe; these documents will be stored in this location for duration of at least 5 years.

**Field Notes**

Field notes were used to record the physiological responses of participants as they gave their responses. Some responses were more thorough than others, and it was later important to review the field notes to determine if there was any other critical information about the responses. Each participant was told that I would be taking notes at the start of the study to prevent apprehension about me taking notes. None of the participants vocalized their discomfort with me taking notes.

**Field Note Observations**

During the interview sessions, I was able to annotate certain body language, expressions, and signs of agitation, from the participants. Overall, many of the participants showed similar signs of expressions during the answering of the interview questions. Similar expressions that were displayed were talking with their hands, both a lack of eye contact and some direct eye contact when responding, looking up to the ceiling as to reflect back and think of a response, closing eyes as to reflect back and tell a story for a response, deep and heavy breaths when responding to questions that provided some uncomfortable responses and reflection. While much of the interviews were of serious nature, there were moments from the participants where things would lighten up. During those times, many of the respondents would laugh and smile when reflecting and giving their responses. Additionally, I witnessed participants fight back tears, heard crackling in their voices when reliving certain experiences, sobbing, and experienced one participant walk out of the interview while displaying obvious signs of anger only to come back and finish the interview moments later.



P10 was the most thorough in responding to the interview questions. It was valuable to review the field notes to couple responses with physiological factors. P10 had an emotional outburst and spoke with extreme visual signs of hurt when responding to Q8 and explaining the negative comments heard. At the same time, I observed the respondent close their eyes as trying to go back to the moment that they experienced the negative comments. P10 again showed irritation and agitation when responding to Q9 by showing constant eye rolling and at one time slapping hands on the table out of visible frustration with the current political climate and the attacks on Muslims.

P3 reflected on a particular experience when responding to Q4 and it ultimately led the participant to exit the interview. At the time the participant exited the interview, I visibly saw a change of emotion come down the face of the participant from the previous interview question. The quick change of emotion prompted the participant to have tears fill their eyes and run down their face. The participant placed their hands over their face and indicated that they could not finish and asked to be excused. It was at that time that I stopped recording the interview and ceased note taking as the participant walked out of the room. I followed up with the participant a few minutes later outside where they were visibly disturbed and still had an abundance of emotions showing on their face. The participant approached me and apologized for leaving. At that time, I indicated that we did not have to continue and that I greatly appreciate their responses but the participant insisted that we go back and finish the interview. P3 took as much time as they needed to fully recover in order to complete the interview. Once we resumed the interview, P3 still showed anger and frustration in their response to Q4 but managed to get through it.

Participant responses indicated that most of them want society to understand and accept their cultural differences. Further affirmation of this notion may be viewed from the historical interactions among Arab American Muslims and non-Arab American Muslims in America. This notion can also be examined from the perspective of the treatment of minorities in America. Arab American Muslims have a sense of community that is critical to their dedication to their beliefs. The responses from participants suggested that they feel as they belong in this country; however, not all are willing to sacrifice their comfort in pursuit of these beliefs. This notion is supported by the common notion to congregate among friends and family with common values and identity.

### **Description of Data Analysis Process**

The initial plan was to use a single method of coding to analyze the participants' responses. However, after using the selective reading approach to highlight and code each response, I wanted to determine if auto coding would reveal connections that were not previously identified. The data analysis process occurred in three stages: (a) auto coding without coding filters, which allowed the software to find the most commonly used terms, (b) auto coding with parent and child codes as the coding filters and (c) line by line selective reading. Line by line selective reading was by far the most tedious process; however, analyzing the results of all three processes, while time demanding, proved valuable to the findings of the research.

To analyze the data in an inductive manner, several steps were implemented. These steps included organizing the data to identify relationships, patterns, themes, and

connections. Coding was only used to analyze the participant interviews; field notes were analyzed after all coding was completed. The field notes were organized similarly and accurately labelled with the corresponding participant code (P1, P2, P3...etc.). After each interview, the audio tapes were transcribed and saved in a Microsoft Word document. The data analysis process took approximately three weeks to complete as it was important to read and re-read transcribed texts to ensure accuracy. To create alignment in the management and organization of the data, I identified themes and organized the data in a way that would allow me to organize the results in a clear, concise manner. Interacting with the data in three ways allowed me to make informed decisions about developing conclusions from the participants' data.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The factors that contributed to addressing trustworthiness in qualitative research included addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Addressing these elements in qualitative research is valuable because there is more interaction between participants and the researcher in qualitative research. To ensure evidence of trustworthiness I used member checking before and during the interview. I checked the accuracy of the information recorded in allowing the participants to review their response prior to leaving the interview. I also sent transcripts of the transcribed data to each participant to allow them to verify their responses.

### **Credibility**

The purpose of addressing credibility in qualitative research is to ensure that the research findings are credible, believable, and true. The credibility of qualitative research

is contingent upon the skills of the researcher as the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. Triangulation is a qualitative validity strategy that is used to ensure credibility (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation occurs when two or more approaches are combined in the investigation of a research question (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using interviews to corroborate other sources of data is effective in removing bias.

I also engaged in three types of coding processes to examine the findings. First, I used auto coding to identify themes based on commonly used terms. This process helped to identify themes based solely on participant responses. I reviewed the compilations and thoroughly examined the responses to determine the context that the participants used to reference the themes. I then used auto coding to identify references in relationship to the parent codes. I similarly reviewed the compilations and examined the references based on context. Finally, I manually coded the responses based on the coding framework found in Table 2 which aligned the parent codes and child codes by specific questions. This yielded the most reliable analysis of participant responses; however, all three code processes were vital to minimizing biases and triangulating all aspects of participant responses.

Furthermore, member checking, thick descriptions, and transcriptions from the audio of participants allowed me to strengthen the validity of the findings. Using a phenomenological research design in this study reduced threats to validity which led to triangulation over an extended period. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized the use of

triangulation to authenticate research findings. This study relied heavily on the responses of participants in the interview setting.

### **Transferability**

External validity refers to the extent to which findings can be transferable beyond the boundaries of a study (Benet, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To enhance transferability, I created questions that would allow me to have thick descriptions of the participants' experiences. To determine if research is transferable, the researcher must supply thick descriptions of participants' experiences. Thick descriptions allow for comparisons to similar situations (Creswell, 2007). Providing thick descriptions also allowed me to connect patterns of culture and relationships when I coded the data.

### **Dependability**

Dependability criterion in qualitative research is synonymous to reliability criterion in quantitative research. Dependability refers to the extent to which research findings can be repeated with similar results (Benet, 2014; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure dependability, I accounted for the changing context by using handwritten notes and audio recordings. Clear descriptions of the research design, its implementation, and detailed information about the data collection process are examples of methods used to ensure dependability.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is linked to objectivity in qualitative research. Confirmable data has logical and clear associations that can be linked back to the data collection and analysis process. The research findings and interpretations must be supported by the data

(Benet, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I implemented steps to ensure that the research findings were a reflection of the data and not my own predispositions. I understood that my own perceptions about the research variables could potentially bias the findings but made a conscious effort to record verbatim responses. Throughout the interviews I offered various opportunities for reflection by restating responses for confirmation, giving the participants the opportunity to member check at the conclusion of the interview, and conducting a follow up with participants within two weeks of participating in the study. The authenticity of the responses contributed to confirmability as well, and such responses are highly guarded in a safe to which I am the only person with access.

### **Results of the Study**

The results presented represent a reflective compilation of all interviews based on the questions outlined in Appendix B. The primary goal of data analysis was to identify common themes and interpret their meanings in relation to the research variables. The data analysis focused on the most recurring themes with special attention to parent codes and child codes as outlined in Table 2. I identified the parent and child codes in Table 2 based on research about the emergent themes in research of Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory and Johnson's (1992, 1996) polarity management theory as outlined in Chapter 2. Observation was also an important aspect of this research as handwritten notes were taken regarding non-verbal communication of the participants. Body language and facial expressions provided valuable information about the participants' physiological responses to certain questions.

### **Central Research Question**

The central research question examined the lived experiences and perspectives of young Arab American Muslims. The 12 structured interview questions were designed to examine this central research question in further detail (Appendix B).

### **Coding Steps**

The first step in the coding process that I conducted was an auto coding of data in NVivo to identify commonly used terms in the participants' responses. Essentially, the software did a search for the commonly used terms based on the fourteen participant's responses. This method was only used to see what are the most commonly used words in the responses received and would lead into conducting the line by line coding. This step only provided useful in helping to better align future coding efforts such as line by line manual coding. On the other hand, this step did provide to yield too much data which needed to further curtailed to meet what the information that I was requesting.

Commonly used terms included background, culture, respect, campus, Caucasian, college, comments, diverse, experiences, family, friends, group, head, life, minority, negative comments, people, politics, positive comments, and white friends. When I selected auto code in NVivo, the most common code was people. From this information I received, I then moved to a more rigorous method of the line by line coding. There I began taking each lined response from the fourteen participants and began to seek which of the lines of response align with the parent codes. From the identification of parent codes in each participant's response and the commonly used terms, I was able to identify

child codes. As an example P3, P5, P7, P10, P12, and P14 all referenced people in their response.

P3 referenced people two times in the response. P3's response was coded under diversity because it presented the attitudes of a person who sought to associate with others with commonalities. It also represents a lack of diversity in establishing friendships:

What I mean by that is that I closely associate and befriend people that look just like me.

P5 referenced people two times in the response. The first reference was:

Sometimes people ask to understand.

The implication is that some people have positive attitudes about diversity as they seek to gain understanding about differences; however, the second reference was negative regarding attitudes and diversity:

I think the best thing I can say is that sometimes people assume I don't know or that I'm biased on certain beliefs because I'm Arab Muslim and so they don't include me or they ignore me completely.

P7's reference to people examined the attitudes or perceptions regarding justice. Justice was not a previously identified code; however, the phrase "for the people" is commonly used in relation to justice. According to the coding framework and the research conducted in the examination of literature, P7's reference could also fit into the framework of diversity as well. For the sake of this study, it will be classified under the parent code diversity:



It is a country for the people—white people.

P10's reference to people focused on the perception of others in relation to profiling which is one of the child codes to equality.

But when I walked in, it was primarily Caucasian staff and Caucasian customers I noticed a handful of people kind of just looking at me a little oddly.

P12's reference to people examined diversity. The first reference is related to diversity. The first part of the sentence, "people don't understand that I pray multiple times a day" was coded as diversity because it was aligned with the child code culture. The second part of the sentence was, "sometimes people are very sarcastic and cruel" was coded as disrespect.

P14's response also referenced the Hijab Effect and was coded as culture:

Some of us wear taqiyah's all day and others just to pray and when we are together people stare and whisper.

### **Prevalence of Parent and Child Codes**

Diversity and equality was the two parent codes used for this study. Additionally, a number of child codes were associated with these two parent codes. Interestingly enough, much of the responses were closely aligned with the child codes based on context from the line by line coding.

**Diversity.** All of the questions included in Appendix B reflect on the participants' lived experiences regarding diversity. Diversity was noted forty three times throughout all of the data sets ( $f=43$ ) which can be seen in Appendix E. However, the participant's responses provided additional insight about diversity as it relates to some of the child

codes. Of note, many participants discussed being respected with regards to diversity, feeling a need of inclusion and participating when dealing with diversity, and cultural diversity.

P3 identified as a 20 year old female student who prided herself on diversity but most of all respect not only amongst peers but amongst others outside of here circle. In P3's responses, early on it was highlighted that diversity is indeed a problem where she attends higher education studies:

Look, on our campus there is a problem with diversity and equality. I think that is just about every campus though really. I mean we have a small African American population and I have some friends who tell me they are treated unfairly.

Furthermore, P3 also explained an instance where diversity and respect all resonated at some point in her daily activities:

From my experiences on campus, I have seen how much people tend to just keep their distance from me and some of my friends. I recall specifically, walking down a specific street in Washington, DC on Saturday afternoon with a bunch of friends, a group of guys looked at us and moved to the other side of the sidewalk. We well I did not really pay much attention to it but then one guy was like damn fucking terrorist bitches. It really made me hurt inside but it isn't the first time I have heard this type of language or sentiment.

P5 who identified as a 22 year old working female shared similar sentiment related to diversity and respect in her daily employment activities:

I once heard a man tell another man in my office that I was 'that hire'. He said I was two checks on two boxes that met the 'diversity criteria'. I am a woman and I am Muslim. That's what's wrong with diversity, its numbers on a statistics report.

P7 expressed issues while on a college campus during her undergraduate studies as it relates to diversity, inclusion and participation, and culture:

As a college student, there is the chance that you will not identify with the other students on campus. I primarily feel as though I was an outsider in university because I did not feel close to anyone there. It was not until the senior year that I began to branch out. I do not think there are enough opportunities in universities to merge cultures. Most single people out based on their affiliations, and that is not my idea of diversity.

P7 also shared how through the lack of diversity and respect, she is often confined to rely on peers who share a similar cultural line in order to feel respect:

The most respect I get comes from people of the same culture. There is no sense of collegiality and support from other cultures.

P4 shared insight on how accomplishing diversity when amongst colleagues and in social settings is at times challenging due to cultural stigma:

The biggest challenge for me is feeling comfortable around groups of people who aren't similar to my own. I feel a sense of imposter syndrome. I am anxious when I must share a difference of opinion amongst these groups, even if my ideas are great improvements and should be heard.

P8 who identified as a 19 year old college student showed that he did in fact have a diverse group of friends and that he could step outside of his comfort zone when dealing individuals which did not look like him or most importantly practice or believe in his same religion:

The only time I feel respected is when I am around friends of mine that are white. The referenced statements share insight on how diversity as a whole was discussed in this study. Overall, diversity was not a major point of emphasis for the participants in this study. However, when expanding diversity into issues related to respect, inclusion and participation, and culture there were “hidden” statements which indicated bigger messages. Obviously, there is a sense that majority of the participants felt that diversity was an issue but 12 out of the 14 participants clearly associated diversity issues to the fact that their cultural identification is a direct result of such issues which further leads to issues of respect and a lack of wanted inclusion and participation.

**Equality.** Most of the interview questions which were asked of the participants reflect on their lived experiences regarding equality. However Q3 provided clear direction about the lived experiences of equality. Equality was noted a total of sixty one times in the entire data set ( $f=61$ ). Within the parent code of equality, additional child codes were also aligned. These child codes also, similarly to diversity’s child codes, included respect, inclusion and participation and culture. In a stark revelation of this study three of the 14 participants noted that they do not feel as though they are equal in this country while the majority of the participants either did explain there some equality issues or they were completely equal.

P1 who initially began the interview in a disinterested sense and later became very involved ultimately feels that there is a serious equality issue within the United States due to cultural identification and stereotypes which ultimately lead to profiling. It ultimately leads to issues with respect, inclusion and participation:

I never feel like I have truly accepted by anyone who is not of Arab descent. I feel as though we are all judged and that everyone views us as enemies. When I go to the store with my jihad, people stare. So what I am describing is that anytime I go in public there is always fear because I do not know what people are thinking. I do not know if they think I am a threat, but it definitely makes me feel as though I have to be careful everywhere I go.

P1 would further elaborate on this and fully state her beliefs as to where equality stands:

There is no such thing as equal treatment in this country. There is always the opportunity to treat someone better or worse because there are so many differences. Some people treat me differently because I am a woman, so no.

P1 shared one of the most impactful statements to the last question of the interview. As mentioned, P1 became more engaged in the responses as the interview went on and in the last statement; there is a stark call for more equality, inclusion, and respect:

The biggest challenge I have is actually having the opportunity to show them who I am. As I said before, we are all generalized into one category. I think the University is making great strides to be more inclusive of various cultures, but we have not arrived to where we should be. It will take purposeful leadership and

initiatives in order for us to truly have a diverse environment where we are all treated the same. This seems to be more of a utopia than a reality.

P3 also shared very similar comments related to the equality of Arab Americans. P3 shared varying viewpoints from the experiences they have when on campus, in a public place and while at an employment site:

Honestly, I feel like I am treated the same only when around my small group of friends. I know that seems a bit biased but it is true in my case. I mean just going back to the example I just gave, can you imagine me having to deal with them on a daily basis. It just would not work or benefit anyone. Now I can say that in a controlled setting such as the classroom and on my internship location, I am treated just as the same as everyone else. I do think that those people are genuine and that the treatment is not forced. When I am in those settings I tend to feel really good. I feel happy on the inside and I feel a sense of relief from the everyday life of hatred.

P13 identified as a 25 year old male currently employed full time. It was evident that P13 was never on the receiving end of being blatantly mistreated and could not fully share many experiences to where equality was an issue. However; P13 did make a conclusion based on what has been witnessed in places of employment by him and by his peers:

I have never been mistreated, but I do not think Arab Americans have the same privileges as other groups of people. People of Arab descent must excel to have a chance at employment in high profile and highly target jobs. For example, if a law

firm is hiring a new partner, the Arab American must have excelled in a top law school to have a chance at employment.

As mentioned earlier, there were some participants who could not express times being treated differently nor had the belief that inequality exists amongst Arab Americans. P2 was one of those participants which felt that equality was not really an issue when discussing this topic:

At school I feel that I am treated like everyone else. I don't feel different, at least not yet. My friends are mostly Arab and the ones who aren't don't treat me differently because I am. It's easy to be treated the same when we are all studying the same thing.

P5 examined how friendships helped to establish their feelings of equality. Additionally P5 introduces the concept of how diversity and equality can work simultaneously to foster a positive outcome within society such as inclusion and respect:

I have a very diverse group of friends. When we go out together I don't feel different. I'm the only Arab American Muslim in the group and I never feel different or discriminated against. I feel like because we are close they look out for me. For instance, my friends already know when I must pray, and they are respectful of that. So, when we plan to go watch a movie or anywhere really, they work around that time. It's comforting to know that they support my beliefs even when they don't practice them. Another example is when we go out to restaurants, they know that I don't eat certain foods and so they make sure there are a lot of options to choose from. They let me know where we are going first and give me

the chance to tell them I can or can't go. I appreciate that very much because it shows they care about me and value me as a friend.

P10 also examined the power of friendships and the role it has played in not only developing diversity but equality as well:

You know I am a very friendly and easy going person. I talk to just about everyone. I have various groups of friends. One group Black another group Muslims, and a very small group of whites. I will say that my Black friends actually treat me just like them. We have fun and go out and drink and party often and I often have my group of friends from those Middle Eastern countries tag along. I think we all get along just good. When I am with both of these groups I don't think any of us look at one another as being different and it makes me feel really good. I get a sense of comfort knowing that I can just be myself and not have to prove myself as belonging.

P6 took a different approach to highlight the positivity when dealing with equality as well as diversity while describing instances that involve their young children:

When my children are invited to birthday parties or when I am included in outings with other moms at their school I don't feel different. I feel happy to see my children playing with other children who aren't Arab. I want them to make friends with other children and not just children from their culture. It's important to me because I want them to realize we are no different from one another. I feel happy when they are included and not singled out. I feel happy when I'm included



as well. Being around other women can be nice sometimes and they understand the struggles of motherhood.

P7 reflected on diversity and equality from childhood experiences:

When I was growing up, my school was very diverse. I feel as though they treated everyone the same. As I look back, I appreciate those moments and hope that my children will have similar experiences.

P12 reflected on adulthood diversity and equality:

The neighborhood I live in is very diverse. I wouldn't say that it is made up of mostly one culture or faith. I feel at home there, I don't feel different and I like that.

P8 shared that their ability to participate with everyone else and to be included amongst the diverse group of friends shows their experience with equality as a whole:

So I play flag football with the guys during intramural times in the fall and then soccer in the spring and I am always treated fine for the most part. Going back to my last response, I had to pray during the game one time and the guys on the team understood and allowed me to miss the first few minutes of the game and welcomed me back in like nothing was different. I felt a sense of peace and had no worries that anyone would do anything to hurt me.

One of the most common discussion points from the participant's responses were equality issues when in amongst peers who all are the same in a large group in public. Based on the responses from many of the participant's it would appear that much of the negative

aspects of equality and outliers such as respect, inclusion and participation are based on this factor.

P9 provided an example of equality issues within the workplace that was based on group presence:

When there is a majority population of any minority group in there, that group is usually under the advisement and/or management of less educated and less qualified Caucasians. Because of this, members of the minority group are usually overworked, uncompensated for their ideas (which are usually stolen by upper management), and left frustrated with the system as a whole.

P10 provided an example of the plausible unintentional group discrimination that occurred after bringing two groups of friends of diverse backgrounds together which ultimately ended with a negative outcome for equality and inclusion:

I tried this once with my Arab American friends and white friends hanging together but it was just awkward. We all met up together at a restaurant for food but I could tell my white friends were a bit hesitant to spark conversation with my other friends. Now I have been around my white friends before and they are rowdy at time so to see them like this it was a bit of a shock. Well low and behold my white friends I guess decided that they weren't really going to associate with me as well and the entire dinner was just uneasy. I remember asking my white friends why they treated us like that and they mentioned that it wasn't anything personal but they just did not want to offend anyone and say the wrong things. Our relationship has kind of taken a back seat lately because of that.

P11 helped to clarify an understanding of what is constituted as a group. A group in this participant's case proved to be more than one person, which they considered to be a child and their parent. This experience helped to define the term group as it related to the classification of responses for this study:

My dad and I go out often after we close down the shop and because of our traditional wear, and our language we use to communicate, we are treated a bit different. People go to the other side of the sidewalk, they don't look us in the eyes, no one says hello. Refused services for things. It's disheartening! I think we have become numb to our feelings now.

P13 while sharing some brief examples of how profiling and stereotyping was a direct result of a lack of equality, helped to expand on reasons for group discrimination:

People feel threatened when they are among a group of us. It is as though our presence frightens them. I can recall abhorrent stares when boarding a plane to D.C. as a family. People stare at you as if you are going to harm them when we are just people looking to enjoy the same liberties and freedoms as others. My mother and father moved to this country as immigrants so they have more experience with negative attitudes and perceptions. I know that they struggled sometime in the 1980s as immigrants due to the stereotypes and various forms of discrimination. Their time seemed to improve in the 1990s only to be horrible in the 1990s and the 2000s due to continued conflicts with Arab and Muslim states.

P14 presented insight as to how the culture wear of a group can create the issues with equality and respect:

This is especially true when I am out with my closest friends, who are also Muslim. Some of us wear taqiyah's all day and others just to pray and when we are together people stare and whisper. Once we were at a restaurant and the waiter refused to serve us. Three servers refused our table. It wasn't until the fourth server came and he served us. He was very polite and smiled the whole time. He even joined our conversations a few times. Even though he made the experience pleasant the fact that 3 other servers refused to serve us always bothered me. We did nothing wrong but sat at a table.

P3 share a similar experience but also explained how this experience may have built resiliency:

I mean the entire group of us, all hijab wearing Muslim women who happen to look like Middle Eastern, were all treated bad. It was about 4 guys who look like they could have attended our university that treated us really bad that day. I mean instead of just walking past us and not saying anything, one of the boys had to say something and the rest of them laughed and kept going on and on with the insults. Now that I think of it and talking about it is jogging my memory one of the boys grabbed at one of my friend's arm but she pulled it away. I don't know what his intentions were but it was definitely a scary time. I was frustrated, angry but at the same time had self-content to maintain my own dignity. Now there was another incident where a friend and I were being followed by this guy in a neighborhood as we rode our bikes. He followed us in his car. My friend who was with me is a male and decided to ask the guy why he kept following us. The

guy only said that it was his neighborhood and we look suspicious. I am not sure how we looked suspicious as being bike riders but my friend was visibly upset. I wanted to cry but I didn't. I am a bit stronger than most.

P9 also discussed resiliency by attributing the result to being that of education degree status:

I have realized that the more educated and higher position I obtain in more work, the less subjected I am to discrimination. So, I leave home daily with the mindset that I must work ten times harder and be ten times better than the average person.

P4 noted that assimilation has helped to decrease discrimination:

I believe my ability to assimilate decreases the amount of profiling and discrimination I endure. The more 'American' I appear, the less trouble I experience in my daily life.

P5 also shared one of the worst experiences of discrimination in a public place because of being in a group which ultimately highlights the negative and positive aspects of equality and its outliers respect, inclusion, and culture:

My family and I decided to go to the community pool in the neighborhood where I live. It's a very large pool and it's nice. While we were there, a family came in, a mom, dad and their two children. The dad looked at my family and shook his head. At first I thought maybe it was something that his children did but I wasn't sure. After about an hour his wife walks over to where we were and started to yell. He said he was going to call security if we didn't leave and that we weren't welcome there. He told us that we shouldn't have been there at all. We asked her

repeatedly what we did wrong and she began to curse and yell louder. There were multiple children with us and they got really quiet and began to stare at her. It was scary. At first we thought about leaving but another family walked up to my father and I and told us not to leave. He told us that the other family was being rude and we didn't do anything wrong. So we stayed. About 15 minutes later security came and asked us all to leave. We all became upset and asked why when we did nothing wrong. Security continued to ask my family and me to leave and got louder and louder. The other family who was nice approached the security officer and told him what happened and he walked over to the wife and man who yelled at us. After a few minutes they were asked to leave and escorted the family out. We never got an apology from security or the family. We still don't understand what we did wrong and we never went back to the pool again. It was embarrassing and I think it was because we are Muslim.

Equality by far was the most identified parent code in this study. Additionally, much of the child code references accurately captured equality in the participant's responses.

When looking at equality in this study, participant's shared different experiences and viewpoints as to the level of either negative or positive equality experienced. Much of this can be attributed to the setting in which the participants are in. For the most part, the responses reveal that equality seems to only have negative impacts when in public places away from the campus. However, there are times of negative aspects of equality as it relates to the workplace.

### **Other Coding Observations**

One of the most impactful observations is seeing how the participants responded to these situations in which they discussed. In the previous section, resiliency was discussed briefly; however some participants explained how they have adjusted based on their experiences. P1 discussed being cautious about surroundings. P13 shared the same sentiments:

As a result, I began to become more cognizant of my surroundings. I would not say that I became fearful, but I became more aware that something could happen at any time.

P2 discussed being more selective of the types of restaurants selected to ensure that there were a variety of meat options to avoid restaurants that serve more than pork. P5 decided to become more accepting of differences but to also avoid certain places:

I avoid going to certain areas where I think I'll be discriminated against. I avoid conversations with people I don't know because I worry about what they will say or what they think. It's not a good way to live but sometimes I think that it is necessary.

P14 also shared:

When I'm with my close friends and our families are not with us, our children and our wives, I am reluctant to go anywhere that doesn't primarily serve the Arab community. Restaurants, malls, and even a coffee house. I remember what happened and I am anxious of it happening again. It's offensive and I think even asking the question 'why' would make it worse.

P10 provided the most thorough responses in regard to all interview questions and subsequently had the most referenced themes. In response to Q2 regarding negative experiences, P10 provided the following:

Oh boy where can I even start? There is just so much that happens but I don't want to take up too much of your time. There was a time that I actually applied for a position down the street from campus at this local small time coffee shop that I won't name for obvious reasons. But when I walked in, it was primarily Caucasian staff and Caucasian customers I noticed a handful of people kind of just looking at me a little oddly. I went to the counter and asked for an application to complete for hiring as I noticed the Hiring sign in the front window. Immediately I was notified that they were not hiring at the time but would give me an application to take home to complete and bring back. What I did was I completed the application there in the shop and asked to meet with the manager for a brief second. The manager came out and indicated that he would be in touch with me the next day as they were a little busy. The next day I went back to the shop to actually purchase a beverage and saw the manager. There was about 4 people in the shop. I spoke to the manager only for him to give me a cold stare. So being the person that I am I decided to pursue him for a conversation on my application. He indicated I needed to complete a new application. I asked what happened to the one I did yesterday and he mentioned he did not receive it. I automatically thought that it was thrown away or something. I completed yet another application and handed to him personally. He took 2 minutes and looked



it over and said well I am sorry we aren't hiring but we will keep for future hiring efforts. I then questioned him on why there was a sign out front yesterday and today about hiring. He said oh it is just there and we haven't taken it down yet. A few weeks later, a girl in my class was talking to another student about how she just started working at this small coffee shop down the street from main campus and I interjected and asked which place. Once she said the name I automatically knew there was some issue with me being hired there and it may have to do with my outside appearance.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the purpose of this phenomenological case study and the research questions were presented to establish alignment and context for the presentation of codes. I also provided a detailed description of the research environment, data collection, and data analysis process. The data collected were analyzed into categories and extracted into themes based on frequency and context. The results of the study are based on field observations and participant responses to the 12 questions asked in the study. I also identified the methods utilized to ensure trustworthiness. Based on the responses of research participants, it is presumed that there will be opportunities to examine ways to create more just societies to improve diversity, equality, and perceptions for young adult Arab American Muslims. In Chapter 5, the findings are interpreted and there is a discussion of limitations of the study, implications for social change, and conclusions about recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to examine the experiences, beliefs, and attitudes of young adult Arab American Muslims to examine the results of this study through the lens of the polarities of democracy to see if one or more of the polarities are not being managed or leveraged well. Prior to this study, there was limited empirical data on the perspectives of the target population. To address the gap in literature, I used qualitative methods that embodied phenomenological values which included in-depth interviews and field notes of observation. The phenomenological approach was the most appropriate because it allowed me to obtain a subjective view of the 14 participants' experiences. In addition, this approach allowed me to provide descriptions of their lived experiences using their direct responses which ultimately assisted me with understanding their experiences.

The discussion is critical to providing an evaluative assessment of research findings using participant responses along with the interview questions. Such discussions were aligned with the central research question: What are the attitudes and lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims between the ages of 18 and 25, regarding discrimination and profiling experienced in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area since the passage of the APA? The semi structured interviews identified in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 were used to answer the central research question. The findings were derived from data analysis of observations and interviews which were created after reviewing literature regarding the research variables. The findings of this

study have also allowed me to identify possible solutions and to outline recommendations for future research on similar concepts and concepts not addressed in this research. The conclusion of this qualitative phenomenological study is reported in this chapter.

### **Interpretation/Discussion of Findings**

Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy was used as the theoretical framework while Johnson's (1996) polarity management was used as the conceptual framework. The discussions focused on the major themes that emerged from participants' responses. Participants were asked 12 interview questions. In the section below, I have identified important themes that emerged from the study.

#### **Themes Identified**

**Participation and Representation.** Using the context of Johnson's (1996) work it is important to understand that participants do not want diversity or equality; they want a solution that represents the presence of both. Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) theorized that the polarities of democracy model can serve as a unifying element of democracy that can guide social change efforts. The addition of participation as an emerging theme represents a cultural responsibility towards inclusion. The theme participation in this instance referred to public view and media perception.

According to P10, Arab American Muslims want to be understood:

I just really want people to understand that we may have different beliefs, but we are human just as anyone else walking around. Many of us were born here and are American citizens and to be told to go back to your country, well many of us have never been. Our parents came here but we just want to be treated fairly and

equally. The same people that say all police aren't bad will categorize my people for devilish few that carry out hatred, but they don't represent me and what I have come to love about my culture and my affiliation with it.

P11 attributed the treatment of Arab American Muslims to the lack of diversity in the coverage of news: "I don't hear conversations of this kind, but I know they happen. I'm usually met with stares and/or silence when I enter a room void of my usual peers." P4 agreed:

I do not hear comments in the negative or positive about Islam or Muslim persons. However, I'm sure they occur. There's a level of blatant racism the South that is hard to explain. You don't hear or see evidence of its presence, but it's noticeable in your interactions with people. I can definitely say that around here, no one likes immigrants. So, that includes me.

When asked about necessary changes, P11 offered the following:

I would alter the media's coverage of Islam/Muslim people, so that it provides more information about our traditions, culture, and religion and less about our war. If people know or learn more about us, it can be humanizing and may remove some of the stigma associated with being Islam/Muslim.

Similarly, P4 stated:

I would have more discussions about minority races/ethnicities and their struggles in a group forum on a regular basis (monthly), televising those discussions. I would also provide more information about Islam and Muslim culture, so that our

practices are better understood and respected for their differences and similarities.

We are all people, after all.

Ultimately, these participants have a greater sense of hope for more understanding and opportunities for others to learn about the culture. Additionally, participation and representation became a general concept for these participants as they viewed media and political figure influences. Often times expressed in participant responses, lack of representation and participation were direct results of media influences.

By examining the fears and oppressions of those who have been isolated, society can maximize opportunities for participation and representation. Johnson (1996) explained that polarity management is enforced only when there is an unsolvable problem. Johnson's conceptual framework regarding polarity management serves as an adequate perspective for strengthening participation and representation. In addition, Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) perspectives on participation and representation polarities pair can be used to address the societal concerns regarding lack of participation and lack of representation. From many of the participants responses mentioned, there is an indication that they feel that they are not included or able to participate in many different activities or in social gatherings due to their cultural identification.

**Impact of diversity, equality, and participation on homogeneity.** The responses from the participants created the opportunity for me to understand the importance of congregating among people who have the same values and cultural identity. The contexts of many of the responses were relevant for managing the polarities of democracy. Many of the participants believed that their culture is unique but is full of

stereotypes from the outside environment. As a result, the participants were generally more comfortable with congregating among people with the same religious and cultural values. Steen (2010) argued that organizations are more homogeneous than society in general. Homogeneity is particularly popular because it reduces monitoring and influence activities and improves the quality of communication while facilitating delegation and coordination (Steen, 2010). Homogeneity, for the purposes of this study, created times where many of the participants felt they were treated differently but often found relief within the same group of people. As evident when P1 and P4 indicated that while there was conflict when in a group setting, it ultimately is one of the few times each of them felt respected. P1 indicated:

I previously mentioned that when I am with my peers I feel the most comfortable; however, this is also the time when I am more likely to experience the most negative tensions with others. People have a habit of generalizing us all into one category. So instead of them seeing an Arab American Muslim, they see a terrorist. These tensions are felt whether I am getting on the subway or frequenting Subway. It's just not fair.

P4 was not far off from this sentiment but provided more insight as to how homogeneity can show pride:

When my family and I dine out, some women still wear a hijab and/or burka. My feelings about it depends on how many of us are present. If there are few, I am anxious about our perception and what may happen to us in public. If there are

many, I am proud of us. In groups, we are usually met with stares, unpleasant looks, and whispers from people.

The responses from these participants portray an image that is far too often seen in society, where “like” individuals associate with each other. The understanding portrayed from these particular responses is that there is a sense of safety when in larger groups and no fear of retaliation. Ultimately, this concept relates back to the literature where I examined Pitt (2011) and the internment of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps shortly after the attacks of Pearl Harbor. While it is evident no one of Middle Eastern descent or whom practice the Islamic faith dealt with such horrific measures, there is still a similarity. Because these participants felt the need to stick together and only associate with those of “like” attributes, they feel trapped in a mental concentration camp. This means that the participants feel that they must remain within a certain circle or group of like individuals in order to escape the persecutions of hatred often discussed through participant responses in public settings.

The most commonly used term in all responses was people. It was important to examine the context of the use of the term. The context was that the participants wanted others to respect their culture even if they did not truly understand it. Some of the elements found within the polarities of democracy model included freedom, justice, human rights, and equality. Even though these terms were not explicitly used in the responses, they are connected to the terms equality, diversity, and participation. Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) identified 10 elements organized into five pairs in the polarities of democracy model: freedom and authority, justice and due process, diversity and equality,

human rights and communal obligations, and participation and representation.

Accordingly, each pair has positive and negative aspects with the goal being to maximize positive aspects while minimizing negative aspects. According to Johnson (1996) each element has positive and negative aspects, and the goal is to manage the polarities successfully in order to optimize the positive aspects and minimize the negative aspects. Results obtained from the study suggest that people can positively contribute to maximizing the positive aspects of diversity, equality, and participation while minimizing the negative.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to the experiences and descriptions of research participants from a very specific ethnic and religious group as opposed to including a single ethnic group or a single religious group. The perspectives of the participants may not accurately reflect the views of all young adult Arab American Muslims. However, I deliberately focused on young adult Arab American Muslims to narrow the scope of the study. Furthermore, this limitation was also advantageous for mitigating gaps in literature regarding this topic.

Another limitation of the study was that it was conducted in a single geographical area. All of the participants lived on the east coast and relied heavily on their interactions with people who also live on the east coast. The implication is that they may have different perspectives, opinions, knowledge, and insight about perspectives of others about them. This limitation of this study is consistent with the notion that the results of



the study may not be generalized as young adult Arab American Muslims living in different geographical areas may not share the same experiences.

Even though the number of participants was consistent with qualitative research, 14 participants may be too small of a number to adequately represent the young adult Arab American population in the Washington, D.C. area. Another limitation is in the number of study participants. However, Creswell (2007) explained that adequate determination of sample size reflected the principle of theoretical saturation which suggested a range of 15-39 interviews to achieve saturation. The goal was to achieve thematic saturation; however, because the study relied on RDS, I could not secure an additional participant to obtain the recommended minimum.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the identified gaps in the availability of literature, there is a limited amount of research which specifically deals with the perspectives of young adult Arab Muslim Americans as it relates specifically to the diversity and equality in the United States. However, we see from Arun et al. (2018) where increasing populations of Muslim residents in a particular British city were the center for a study which examined the religion and nationality identity issues of young adult British Muslims. Similarly to this study, the researcher's discussed some of the viewpoints of policy and political media attention which has negatively impacted their acceptance in society (Arun et al., 2018). Moreover, Arun et al., (2018) addressed diversity and equality as an issue for the respondents in their efforts to more closely identify as a British or with their religion while in public. Understanding this, it would be interesting to see a study which also

examined nationality and religious identity issues here in the United States. Additionally, it would also be interesting to conduct this research while still utilizing the Polarities of Democracy model but focused on other polarities of democracy pairs such as participation and representation, and justice and due process amongst a similar age group. As implicated in the results of the study, an emerging theme which arose from this study was that of participation. It would be interesting to see if this reciprocated an emerging theme of diversity and/or equality as well.

Additional research will assist communities in understanding the impact of addressing diversity, equality, perception, participation, and representation issues. If there are to be any changes in addressing these issues, then more information is needed to understand how communities can use polarities management to manage the issues.

### **Implications for Positive Social Change**

There are various implications for promoting positive social change and strengthening diversity, equality, participation, and representation. Such positive social change can be implemented by the media, government agencies, advocates, and the national community as a whole for the advancement for equal treatment of Arab American Muslims. In order for Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) conceptualization of democracy to be applicable, the elements contained within the polarities must be successfully managed as the advancement of democracy as a concept serves as a solution to oppression. Benet further posited that failure to manage the polarities could further enhance conflicts rather than foster partnerships. By managing the polarities of democracy, agencies can address the concerns of people on both sides of oppression.

Therefore, using the polarities of democracy model as a theoretical framework is advantageous in planning, guiding, and assessing advocacy needs.

Benet's polarities model (2006, 2012, 2013) also described how the five polarities are interrelated; strengthening one polarity may positively impact the other polarities within the model. This study contributed to positive social change as I was able to identify what participants needed to feel as though they are cultural accepted and understood. For example, many of the participants reported the desire to feel understood by their diverse peers. They felt most comfortable in homogeneous groups but also indicated that these occasions led to the most encounters of discrimination. Today's society is filled with various opportunities to display positive examples of equality, diversity, and representation; however, they are usually absent from mainstream America.

Another way that this study can bring about positive social change is for people to take responsibility in creating an equitably diverse and representative society. We all have a personal responsibility to advance the fair and equal treatment of all people and more media advertisement could assist with spreading the message. Several of the participants noted their opinions of President Trump towards Muslims and wanted to see more positive connotations from the nation's leader in advancing their rights. When the President uses discriminatory practices, generalize and characterize people of similar religion, it becomes widely accepted and even encouraged.

The participants also mentioned different examples of workplace discrimination in their responses. From a policy perspective, advocates must continue to advance

policies that require employers to eliminate discriminatory practices. Federal and state agencies are responsible for monitoring these practices and those discriminated against must feel more comfortable reporting such acts. Unfortunately, private businesses can limit who they want to frequent their businesses; however, social media has made it easier to identify these places and encourage others not to frequent them.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to critically examine lived experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims living in metropolitan area on the east coast. The study was designed to answer one central research question using semi-structured interview questions. The findings of the study were consistent with scholarly, peer-reviewed research regarding the experiences of Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims living in the United States. Previous research studies on this topic did not take into account how the desire for homogeneity on the part of Arab Americans might affect equitable democratic practices, particularly in terms of how the experiences suggest that homogeneity breeds fear. However, oppression can be mitigated when society more effectively manages the polarities of democracy. The research findings suggest that the polarities of democracy can be used as a unifying model to plan, guide, implement, and evaluate policies and practices that are designed to build healthy, just, humane, and sustainable communities.

In evaluating the credibility of the qualitative data, I phrased the questions using different formats with common themes to ensure that the responses would emerge with logical connections. There are similarities in the results and findings to other research presented in the review of literature; however, the literature did not sufficiently identify

homogeneity as a precursor to discrimination and lack of representation. The failure to account for this cultural realization may have been an oversight as it can be supported with the application of Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) theoretical framework which lists participation and representation as a polarity pair. The short-term impact of continued discrimination, inequality, homogeneity, and misrepresentation could result in the continued oppression of Arab American Muslims. Long-term impacts could hinder the social, political, democratic, and economic development of major US cities similar to the demographics of the east coast metropolitan area used for this study. Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy theory supports the idea that diversity and equality are critical elements of democracy and that these elements are vital to addressing the social, emotional, political, and cultural challenges that young adult Arab Americans face in society. Additionally, Johnson (1996) identified concepts that contribute to the plausibility of overcoming seemingly unsolvable issues. One of the fundamental questions that Johnson demands must be asked is: Can the problem be solved or is it an ongoing polarity or dilemma that must be managed? Polarity management increases in value when issues increase in terms of complexity, change, conflict, and diversity.

Effective managers of issues understand that issues must be examined from both perspectives (Johnson, 1996). The example used is that both the forest and trees must be considered; the individual issue must be addressed from an individual perspective and a community perspective. Effective managers also understand how resistance must be converted to a resource for change. All outcomes for managing the issues must reflect

win/win solutions. By developing both/and thinking, the produced outcomes will result in a balanced response. Finally, it is important to respect and celebrate all differences. The issues regarding diversity and equality in this study are based on the participant's perspectives about how they are treated in society. The research participants reported several examples of situations when they were not treated fairly in the workplace, at school, and in other places in the community as a result of the lack of diversity and equality when in these situations and/or places.

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## Appendix A: Participants' Letter of Introduction to Study

### **Introduction by Interviewer**

Hello, my name is Ronald McDaniel with Walden University. I would like to take this time to thank you for participating in this interview session. This interview is part of a dissertation research requirement to assess if and how young adult (ages 18-25) Arab-American Muslims in the District of Columbia Metropolitan area experience profiling and discrimination post 9/11 and to showcase those lived experiences in a qualitative phenomenological study. Much of the research currently available showcases these experiences for individuals well outside of this age group.

You were recommended for participating in this study because the study focuses on a specific target population. Additionally, you have identified yourselves as Arab-American students between the ages of 18-25 and a current student at one of the local universities who also understand the American Patriot Act and have either experienced or not experienced some form of discrimination and/or profiling in the recent past. I would like to hear from you about the ways in which these experiences have impacted or not impacted your daily life as a college student and a citizen in the DMV area.

During the duration of this interview session, I will ask questions and facilitate a conversation about how you have dealt with recent issues such as profiling and discrimination and its impacts. Furthermore, this is an open dialogue forum with the availability to ask additional questions. The purpose is to stimulate conversation and hear the opinions of everyone in the room. I hope you will be comfortable speaking honestly and sharing your ideas so that I can capture the bigger problems.

As a reminder, please note that this session will be both audio and video recorded with a note taker to ensure we adequately capture your ideas during the conversation. However, your comments from this interview session will remain confidential and your name will not be used in any final reports. At any time, a participant can ask to be dismissed without giving reason. Before we begin, are there any questions?

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Start with simple introduction. Can you tell me your name, school you are attending (if any), age, and what is your country of origin?

### Experiences, Perceptions and Attitudes

1. Please describe any experiences or circumstances where you felt that your status as an Arab American Muslim was being respected? Feel free to be as detailed as you need to.
2. Please describe any experiences or circumstances where you felt that your status as an Arab American Muslim was being held against you? Feel free to be as detailed as you need to.
3. Please discuss any personal experiences where you felt that you were being treated the same as everyone else despite being an Arab American Muslim? Please describe your feelings and attitudes during that time.
4. Please describe any experiences or circumstances where you felt that you and everyone else were being treated the same, but negatively? Please provide your feelings and attitudes during that time.
5. How have these experiences changed your daily activities and other routines? Probe: This may be from times of high school to present period. Also, can have examples of how the entire family and/or select family members may have experienced some form of discrimination and/or profiling.
6. *[Those who indicated they have not experienced discrimination or profiling:]* What do you believe to be the reasons why you have not experienced the same level or any discrimination or profiling as other individuals may have?
7. When thinking about diversity and equality, what would you say are the biggest challenges for you as an individual compared to other members on campus/workplace?
8. Can you describe the negative and positive comments you have heard while on your college campus?
9. Can you describe the negative and positive comments you have heard regarding Islam and Muslim persons through the media and political campaigns and how they have made you feel?
10. Can you describe the negative and positive comments you have heard from your close friends and acquaintances regarding Islam and Muslim persons, and your feelings?
11. Can you describe the negative and positive comments you have experienced in the employment setting regarding Islam and Muslim persons?
12. What is one thing you would do to change people's perceptions of Islam/Muslim people?

## Appendix C: Research Announcement

## Volunteers Needed for Research Study

**Would you like to participate in a study that examines the lived experiences and perceptions of young adult Arab American Muslims since the passage of the American Patriot Act?**

Individuals in large east coast area who are between the ages of 18 and 25 of any gender are eligible to participate.

Participation will involve:

- Completion of an informed consent form
- An approximately 90 minute interview with the researcher
- Opportunity to review transcripts of your interview to verify accuracy

If you are interested in learning more about this study to see if you are eligible to participate, please contact:

Ron McDaniel @

## Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation

Ronald McDaniel, Jr.

September 15, 2017

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am requesting permission to conduct my research titled, How Young Adult Arab American Muslims Experience Discrimination after the American Patriot Act, in collaboration with your organization. I am seeking to understand the experiences of young adult Arab American Muslims post 9/11 and after Congress signed the American Patriot Act.

I will be using criterion sampling through the means of posting flyers for participation in student commons area to attract participants. You serve the target population that I am seeking, and I am hoping to have access to members of your organization as potential participants. Members reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing reason why.

As a student at Walden University, I am responsible for following all IRB protocol regarding research. I will provide you with a copy of my proposal so that you can examine my research objectives to determine if your organization will cooperate with me in completing this study.

Thank you.

## Appendix E: Frequency Tables

## Parent Codes

<b>Prel Codes</b>	<b>Dat a Set 1</b>	<b>Dat a Set 2</b>	<b>Dat a Set 3</b>	<b>Dat a Set 4</b>	<b>Dat a Set 5</b>	<b>Dat a Set 6</b>	<b>Dat a Set 7</b>	<b>Dat a Set 8</b>	<b>Dat a Set 9</b>	<b>Dat a Set 10</b>	<b>Dat a Set 11</b>	<b>Dat a Set 12</b>	<b>Dat a Set 13</b>	<b>Dat a Set 14</b>	<b>Tot al f</b>
Divers ity	2	4	2	2	3	3	4	2	2	7	3	4	2	3	43
Equali ty	5	3	3	4	5	3	4	2	5	8	7	2	6	4	61

## Child Codes

<b>Chil d Cod es</b>	<b>Dat a Set 1</b>	<b>Dat a Set 2</b>	<b>Dat a Set 3</b>	<b>Dat a Set 4</b>	<b>Dat a Set 5</b>	<b>Dat a Set 6</b>	<b>Dat a Set 7</b>	<b>Dat a Set 8</b>	<b>Dat a Set 9</b>	<b>Dat a Set 10</b>	<b>Dat a Set 11</b>	<b>Dat a Set 12</b>	<b>Dat a Set 13</b>	<b>Dat a Set 14</b>	<b>Tot al f</b>
Resp ect	2	2	6	3	4	5	3	3	2	3	3	4	5	4	49
Incl usio n	2	4	4	3	6	8	3	3	2	6	4	4	5	7	61
Parti cipat ion	0	0	1	3	7	5	4	2	1	5	1	3	4	1	37
Disr espe ctful	1	2	2	2	5	3	4	4	2	6	4	3	6	4	48
Cult ure	3	2	5	3	5	6	5	3	5	8	5	7	10	8	75